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Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 35 of the Convention

Initial report of State party due in 2012

Armenia*, **

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Contents

		Paragraphs	*Page*
	Preamble	1–18	4
Part I.	General Provisions	19–56	7
	Article 1 – Purpose	19–31	7
	Article 2 – Definitions	32–34	10
	Article 3 – General principles	35–41	11
	Article 4 – General obligations	42–56	12
Part II.	Special rights	57–283	14
	Article 5 – Equality and non-discrimination	57–62	14
	Article 8 – Awareness-raising	63–82	15
	Article 9 – Accessibility	83–94	18
	Article 10 – Right to life	95–97	20
	Article 11 – Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies	98–103	20
	Article 12 – Equal recognition before the law	104–109	21
	Article 13 – Access to Justice	110–116	22
	Article 14 – Liberty and security of the person	117–122	23
	Article 15 – Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment	123–124	24
	Article 16 – Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse	125–131	24
	Article 17 – Protecting the integrity of the person	132–136	25
	Article 18 – Liberty of movement and nationality	137–152	26
	Article 19 – Living independently and being included in the community	153–163	28
	Article 20 – Personal mobility	164–168	31
	Article 21 – Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information	169–174	32
	Article 22 – Respect for privacy	175–181	33
	Article 23 – Respect for home and the family	182–188	34
	Article 24 – Education	189–199	35
	Article 25 – Health	200–205	37
	Article 26 – Medical treatment and rehabilitation	206–214	38
	Article 27 – Work and employment	215–241	40
	Article 28 – Standards of decent life and social protection	242–255	46
	Article 29 – Participation in political and social life	256–271	49
	Article 30 – Participation in cultural life, sports events and other leisure activities	272–283	52

Part III.	Women and Children with Disabilities	284–308	56
	Article 6 – Women with disabilities	284–295	56
	Article 7 – Children with disabilities	296–308	57
Part IV.	Special responsibilities	309–346	59
	Article 31 – Statistics and data collection	309–319	59
	Article 32 – International cooperation	320–326	60
	Article 33 – Implementation and monitoring at national level	327–346	64

Preamble

1. In line with point 1 of article 35 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Republic of Armenia is submitting to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (hereinafter referred to as "the Committee") this comprehensive preliminary report on the measures for the fulfilment of the obligations thereof stemming from the Convention, as well as on the progress achieved within two years following the entry into force of this Convention.

2. This Report was prepared in accordance with the guidelines and recommendations defined by the Committee.

3. In 2010 the Republic of Armenia ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which entered into force on 22 October 2010. Along with other international treaties, in accordance with article 6 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, this Convention also forms a constituent part of the legal system of the Republic of Armenia after the ratification or approval thereof. In accordance with the same article of the Constitution, where the ratified international treaties provide for norms other than those prescribed by laws, the norms of international treaties apply.

4. The Republic of Armenia has not yet ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, however, the ratification thereof remains in the agenda of the State policy, and it will be ratified in the upcoming years after essential improvements in the equal opportunities and conditions necessary for the full exercise of rights by the persons with disabilities.

5. This Report was prepared by the interdepartmental working group wherein the representatives of the following bodies have been involved:

- Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of the Republic of Armenia (hereinafter referred to as "the MLSA");
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia;
- Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia;
- Ministry of Healthcare of the Republic of Armenia;
- Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia;
- Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Armenia;
- Ministry of Urban Development of the Republic of Armenia;
- Ministry of Territorial Administration of the Republic of Armenia;
- Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of the Republic of Armenia;
- Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Armenia;
- Police of the Republic of Armenia;
- National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia;
- National Commission for Persons with Disabilities.

6. The preparation works of the Report were coordinated by the MLSA of the Republic of Armenia, which is considered as the department coordinating the implementation of the Convention in the Republic of Armenia. Organizations of persons with disabilities and a number of interested non-governmental organizations have had the opportunity to submit recommendations on the structure and content of the Report.

7. The Report was approved by the Government of the Republic of Armenia on _____ December 2012.

8. The Report presents comprehensive information on the situation of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia as well as the main directions and principles of the State policy of the country, aimed at the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and at the social inclusion thereof, as well as summarizes the measures undertaken and the results achieved.

9. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is deemed as a fundamental document for the Government of the Republic of Armenia on the basis whereof the State strategy for the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, including mid-term and annual programmes, are elaborated.

10. The State policy for the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities is based on the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, laws of the Republic of Armenia, decisions of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, other legal acts and international agreements and conventions ratified in the National Assembly.

11. On 24 May 1993 the Republic of Armenia was one of the first States among those within CIS, which adopted a law regulating the sphere of social protection of persons with disabilities. The definition of the concept of "person with disability" was for the first time introduced on a legislative basis in the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia" which was adopted in 1993, in accordance whereof the citizens are considered as persons with disabilities in case they need social assistance or protection for the reason of limitations in vital activities — conditioned by mental or physical incompleteness.

12. The policy implemented in respect of persons with disabilities is well experienced — starting from the care of persons with disabilities in special establishments up to creating necessary conditions for education and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and ensuring equal opportunities. In the last decade the ideology and approaches for resolving the problem of social protection of persons with disabilities were changed in the Republic of Armenia — the medical model of rehabilitation of persons with disabilities was substituted with a social model which implies a comprehensive, multi-lateral involvement of different social institutions in the resolution of economic, social, psychological issues related to disability.

13. Under the social model of disability, approaches in respect of the concept of "person with disability" change. The grounds and criteria for recognizing a person as person with disability change.

14. In the Republic of Armenia the basis of the legislative system for the resolution of issues and regulation of legal relations pertaining to persons with disabilities, comprises the following legal acts:

- Constitution of the Republic of Armenia;
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities — 2006 (UN);
- Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia" — 1993;
- Law of the Republic of Armenia "On the medical aid and support to the population" — 1996;
- Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social assistance"(24 October 2005);
- Law of the Republic of Armenia "On education of persons in need of special conditions of education" — 2005;

- Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia — 2005;
- Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of the population in cases of employment and unemployment" — 2005;
- "On State pensions" — 2010;
- Law of the Republic of Armenia "On urban development" — 1998;
- Protocol Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 44 of 3 November 2005 "2006–2015 strategy for the social protection of persons with disabilities";
- Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 396 of 8 June 1999 "On approving the lists of diseases and social groups of the population having the right to acquire medicine free of charge or under privileged conditions";
- Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 780-N of 13 June 2003 "On approving the indices used during medical and social expertise and the criteria for determining disability degrees";
- Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 318-N of 4 March 2004 "On the medical aid and support free of charge guaranteed by the State";
- Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 1456-N of 23 September 2004 "On approving the procedure for determining the causal link between death and industrial impairments, occupational diseases of a victim, his or her stay in the battlefield, military service and other circumstances";
- Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 1457-N of 7 December 2004 "On approving the procedure for granting, paying pension to an imprisoned in the place of imprisonment, and recognizing him or her as a person with disability";
- Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 1067-N of 28 July 2005 "On approving the base programme on rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and the procedure for the implementation thereof";
- Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 392-N of 13 February 2006 "On approving the procedure for ensuring the accessibility of social, transport and engineering infrastructure for persons with disabilities and groups of population with low mobility";
- Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 276-N of 2 March 2006 "On approving the procedure for implementing medical and social expertise";
- Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 619-N of 11 May 2006 "On approving the criteria for defining the degree of loss of professional capacity as a result of impairments related to labour duties, occupational diseases or other harm caused to health";
- Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 1369-N of 22 September 2006 "On approving the procedure for providing rehabilitation aid";
- Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons — 9 December 1975 — UN;
- Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 453-N of 12 April 2007 "On approving the procedure for providing prosthetic and orthopaedic appliances, technical and other supplementary rehabilitation means, approving the time periods for using the prosthetic and orthopaedic appliances as well as technical and other supplementary rehabilitation means, and on repealing the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 1780-N of 24 December 2003";

- Decision of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia No. 98-N of 25 February 2008 "On creating a National Commission for Persons with Disabilities, on approving the rules of procedure and the composition of the National Commission, and on repealing the Decision of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia No. 747-N of 10 October 2006";
- Decisions of the Government of the Republic of Armenia (adopted annually since 2006) "On approving the annual social protection programmes for persons with disabilities and the lists of measures provided for by these programmes."

15. At present the Draft Law of the Republic of Armenia "On the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and social inclusion thereof in the Republic of Armenia" (hereinafter referred to as "the New Draft Law") has been put into circulation, which regulates the legal relations pertaining to determination of disability, to social, medical and professional rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, to ensuring an accessible environment for persons with disabilities, to the education, labour activities, health maintenance thereof, as well as those pertaining to the minimum social, legal and economic guarantees necessary for participation, on equal basis with everyone, in social life.

16. The resolution of issues of persons with disabilities are carried out within the framework of strategic and targeted programmes, which are aimed at creating equal opportunities for them and realizing the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the State.

17. For the purpose of ensuring equal opportunities for persons with disabilities and effective inclusion thereof into the society, the issues relating to persons with disabilities and the elaboration of relevant policy for the resolution thereof are given importance in the Republic of Armenia. The main idea of the strategy in the field of disability is the transition from the social protection model of persons with disabilities to the model of social inclusion.

General Data

18. As of 1 July 2012 182,379 persons with disabilities are registered in the Republic of Armenia, the 84,981 (46.6 per cent) persons wherefrom are women. As per degree, the following persons are registered:

- 11,057 persons with disabilities of first degree, the 4,542 (41.1 per cent) persons wherefrom are women, which constitutes 5.3 per cent of women with disabilities;
- 86,402 persons with disabilities of second degree, the 38,605 (44.7 per cent) persons wherefrom are women, which constitutes 45.4 per cent of women with disabilities;
- 76,764 persons with disabilities of third degree, the 39,263 (51.1 per cent) persons wherefrom are women, which constitutes 46.2 per cent of women with disabilities;
- 8,156 children with disabilities, the 2,571 (31.5 per cent) persons wherefrom are female children, which constitutes 3.0 per cent of women with disabilities.

Part I. General Provisions

Article 1 – Purpose

19. The purpose of the Convention is to support, protect and ensure the full and equal realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons with disabilities, as well as the respect towards the dignity thereof. The provision of all mentioned above

proceeds in line with the requirements of the international treaties ratified by the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, by adopting and executing new legal acts, by implementing targeted programmes and other measures, including measures of organizational nature.

20. In the preamble of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia" (adopted in 1993) is stated: "This Law shall define the legal, economic and organizational fundamentals of social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia, the basic provisions of State policy on granting more favourable conditions and privileges for the realization of their rights and abilities aimed at ensuring opportunities for persons with disabilities that are equal to those of other citizens of the Republic". Article 3 of the same Law states: "The rights, freedoms and responsibilities prescribed by the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Armenia for the persons with disabilities shall be the same as for other persons". This provision, in fact, ensures non-discrimination under the legal framework.

21. Under the existing legislation of the Republic of Armenia the concept of "disability" is not defined, however, the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia" defines the concept of "person with disability" as follows: "Citizens shall be considered as persons with disabilities in case they need social assistance or protection for the reason of limitations in vital activities — conditioned by mental or physical incompleteness". This definition somehow differs from that provided by the Convention as of which, persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

22. In the stage of adopting the Convention and after its adoption — in 2006–2007, an analysis on the compliance of the legislative field of the Republic of Armenia with international legal norms was conducted in the Republic of Armenia aimed at ensuring the protection and promotion of the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. Particularly, issues relating to legal and economic and technical grounds, the comparison thereof, formation and gradual designated use of legal grounds — through approximation — deriving from international practice, that are necessary for the application of principles contained in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, were studied and discovered.

23. The most important purpose of these works was to consider the disability on the basis of the social, rather than the medical model. The analysis was conducted based on the following classification:

- Adopted international norms;
- The reflection thereof in laws of the Republic of Armenia;
- Analysis with regard to contradictions or provisions yet having not been defined;
- Recommendations in respect of definition, approximation of international provisions, or the revision of principles.

The analysis was sent to the heads of all ministries, departments, deputies to the National Assembly.

24. After the adoption of the Convention, the MLSA of the Republic of Armenia launched works on the development of the new Draft Law "On the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and the social inclusion thereof in the Republic of Armenia" (hereinafter referred to as "the Draft Law"), wherein the concept of "person with disability" is already defined as follows: a person having long-term or stable physical, mental,

intellectual and sensory limitations which in interaction with various environmental barriers hinder the full and effective participation thereof, on an equal basis with others, in social life. The Draft Law has undergone relevant discussions with the participation of all the ministries, departments of the Republic of Armenia, local and international non-governmental organizations.

25. One basic principle is laid down in the Draft Law: every human being shall have the right to live a decent life, participate fully and on an equal basis in social life.

26. Functional or structural disorders of a human organism limit the activities or participation thereof in social life, if his or her needs are not taken into account when building the environment. Otherwise, the availability of equal opportunities and accessible physical, cultural, treatment and other favourable social factors reduces this risk to a possible extent.

27. Upon the Protocol Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 48 of 8 December 2011 the concept on "the transition to a model for determining disability based on determining the degree of capacity for work having been maintained by the person" was approved, according to which, when recognizing a person as person with disability, the priority is given to the capacity for work maintained thereby (the needs for activity, participation and special education of children) as the full participation in social life and economic independence thereof is conditioned by the capacity for work. The capacity for work maintained by the person will be evaluated by percentage. The capacity for work maintained by the person will condition the amount of disability pensions and the types of social assistance.

28. When determining the disability based on the capacity for work maintained by the person, consideration will be given to the fact that the capacity for work is conditioned not only by the functional or structural state of the person, but also by professional, age, environmental, educational and other social factors. The assessment of the maintained capacity for work also implies an assessment of the active involvement of an individual in labour activities. Importance is attached to the rehabilitation of an individual, the arrangement of employment issues.

29. In 2011 the MLSA of the Republic of Armenia organized broad discussions of the provisions of the Convention and those of the Draft Law throughout all marzes [regions] of the Republic, with the participation of marzpets [regional governor], heads of all sub-divisions of the marzpetarans [regional governor's office], heads of medical and educational organizations of marzes and non-governmental organizations dealing with issues of persons with disabilities.

30. The concept of "person with disability" defined by the Law "On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia" is also used in other legal acts of the Republic of Armenia, except for the legal documents of the field of general education wherein is used the concept of "person in need of special conditions of education": "a person the peculiarities of physical and/or intellectual, mental development whereof hinder the mastering of educational programmes without special conditions of education". The Law of the Republic of Armenia "On education of persons in need of special conditions of education" (adopted in 2005) also defines the concept of "special conditions of education": "special educational programmes and teaching methods, personal technical means of teaching, environment for vital activities, as well as pedagogical, social and other services, that are necessary for organizing the education and teaching of persons in need of special conditions of education and without which the mastering of general education programmes and vocational education programmes by the persons in need of special conditions of education proves to be hard or impossible".

31. In 2011 the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia supplemented the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On general education", according which the concept of "person in need of special conditions of education" has a new definition: "person facing difficulties related to learning, including persons with physical or mental peculiarities of development, who need special conditions of education in order to master the main general education programmes", whereas the concept of "special conditions of education" was defined as follows: "an integrity of educational programmes and teaching methods, personal technical means of teaching, adapted environment, as well as pedagogical, social and other services, aimed at mastering by the person the main general education programme".

Article 2 – Definitions

32. The definitions of the main concepts relating to disability are introduced in article 2 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia". These concepts are as follows: "person with disability", "limitations in vital activities", "technical means of rehabilitation and other supplementary appliances", "medical and social expertise", "ensuring access to environment for vital activities", "social protection of persons with disabilities", "Communication", "discrimination on the basis of disability", "reasonable accommodation", "universal design" and other concepts presented in the Convention are missing from the aforementioned Law. The existing difference is conditioned by the fact that the Law was adopted in 1993, whereas the Convention was adopted in 2006 and is built upon the inclusive model.

33. The Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia" does not fully resolve the issues of determining disability, social, medical and professional rehabilitation, development of an accessible environment for persons with disabilities, the inclusion thereof into the society. The following new concepts are already included in the developed Draft Law:

- "social inclusion" — the equal inclusion and active participation of persons with disabilities in social life;
- "capacity for work" — ability to carry out activities in line with the content, volume of the work and the introduced requirements (implementation requirements) within the context of limitation in vital activities of the person and the impact of environmental factors;
- "communication", within the meaning of this Law — display of speech, sign language, symbols and text, Braille, tactile communication, readable print, as well as other accessible information and communication technologies;
- "discrimination", within the meaning of this Law — any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability which has its aim of rejecting the fact that a person with disability may, on an equal basis with others, exercise his or her rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field;
- "environment" — social and cultural conditions, including treatment, as well as physical environment where the person lives, is educated, works, moves and organizes the personal life thereof;
- "environmental factors" — external conditions which have positive or negative impact on the life of a person with disability;

- "reasonable accommodation (adjustments)" — conditions and adaptations, contributing to the ensuring and organization of education and teaching, occupation, communication, cultural, sports activities and other forms of participation of persons with disabilities, that are created taking into consideration the personal needs of the person with disability;
- "social organization" — legal person pursuing statutory goals of social orientation, which contributes to the creation of workplaces and ensuring employment for persons with disabilities;
- "universal design" — the design of environments, programmes, goods and services to be usable by every human being to the maximum possible extent — without any adjustments or specialized design, by not excluding the use of supplementary appliances for particular groups of persons with disabilities;
- "social patronage" — the service of assistant, mediator, personal escort, reader and translator for the sign language, rendered to persons with disabilities.

34. For the purpose of applying the definitions of the aforementioned concepts within the direct meaning set by the Convention, it is planned to ensure relevant mechanisms and procedures under laws and by-laws. To that regard the Draft Law provides for approval of a number of procedures by the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

Article 3 – General principles

35. The principle of "respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons" referred to in the Convention is envisaged in article 14 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, which reads as follows: "Dignity of a shall be respected and protected by the State as an inherent foundation for his or her rights and freedoms".

36. The concept of "non-discrimination" is laid down in article 14.1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, which reads as follows: "Discrimination based on sex, race, skin colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion, ideology, political or other views, membership to a national minority, property status, birth, disability, age, or other personal or social circumstances shall be prohibited".

37. The principles of "full and effective participation and inclusion in society" and "respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity" defined by the Convention are envisaged in their general meaning in Chapter 2 — "Fundamental human and citizen's rights and freedoms" — of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia.

38. In order to further complete and clarify the main principles defined by the Convention, these were included in the Draft Law of the Republic of Armenia "On the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and social inclusion thereof in the Republic of Armenia", which provides for all mechanisms and norms of law, within the direct meaning thereof, ensuring the implementation of general principles introduced in the Convention.

39. The principles of "equality of opportunity", "equality between men and women" referred to in the Convention are envisaged within the general meaning thereof in Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia. In order to envisage more directly the principles and ensure the mechanisms for the implementation thereof, the Draft Law of the Republic of Armenia "On equal opportunities and equal rights of women and men in the Republic of Armenia" was elaborated in the Republic of Armenia, which passed the first reading in the National Assembly in February 2012, and now is in the stage of adoption.

40. The principle of "respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities" referred to in the Convention is envisaged in Chapter 3 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia" and in the Draft Law of the Republic of Armenia "On the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and social inclusion thereof in the Republic of Armenia".

41. The supremacy of the provisions of the Convention is defined by the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Armenia, according which where the principles defined by laws of the Republic of Armenia do not correspond to the international treaties ratified by the Republic of Armenia, the principles defined by international treaties shall apply.

Article 4 – General obligations

42. The State shall guarantee:

- The creation of opportunities on an equal basis with other citizens, active participation of persons with disabilities in economic, political and social processes existing in the society;
- Creation of necessary conditions, which will enable persons with disabilities to live a full life based on the personal capabilities, abilities and personal interests.

43. In this regard, the legislation is being improved, new principles, strategic and programme-based documents are adopted, permanent monitoring of the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities is conducted.

44. For the purpose of protecting the rights and resolving the issues of persons with disabilities, the powers of the Government of the Republic of Armenia and the MLSA of the Republic of Armenia are defined in articles 5.1 and 5.2 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia".

45. Particularly, these powers shall include the development and implementation of policies in the field of social protection of persons with disabilities, as follows:

- Development and implementation of goal-oriented programmes for social protection of persons with disabilities;
- The process of development of programmes for carrying out medical and social expertise and personal rehabilitation programmes for persons with disabilities, the process of implementation of rehabilitation measures;
- Support to non-governmental organizations dealing with issues of persons with disabilities and cooperation therewith;
- Development of methodical documents on the social protection issues of persons with disabilities and the definition of the norms and rules ensuring the accessibility of the environment for vital activities.

46. Chapter 5 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia" lays down the following obligations for the State: discover and eliminate all barriers hindering the realization of rights and full satisfaction of needs of persons with disabilities in respect of the accessibility of the environment, transportation means and information systems.

47. A number of other sectoral laws also lay down provisions aimed at protecting the rights and enhancing the opportunities of persons with disabilities. Thus, as a result of the amendment made to the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On urban development" in 2011, as a mandatory provision, the requirement for ramps in newly built or renovated buildings

was included. Under the amendment made to the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On medical aid and support to the population" in 2010, provisions were added with regard to free of charge or co-funded medical aid to persons with disabilities. As a result of the amendment made to the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On education" in 2011, the idea of inclusive education and a number of provisions regulating this type of education were introduced therein.

48. State interference in the sphere of issues of persons with disabilities, is mainly conducted at the expense of the State Budget of the Republic of Armenia by rendering different services. The overall picture and statistics of social protection of persons with disabilities, exercise of the rights thereof and provision of assistance thereto by the Government of the Republic of Armenia obviously derive from the "2011–2013 mid-term expenditure programme (MTEP)" approved under the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 859-N of 8 July 2010. The main services aimed at rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and ensuring possible equal conditions for them, which are rendered to persons with disabilities at the expense of the State budgetary funds of the Republic of Armenia, are as follows:

- Prosthetics of persons with disabilities, providing them with rehabilitation appliances and the repair thereof, including ocular prosthetics and acquisition of hearing devices;
- Providing persons with disabilities with wheelchairs;
- Providing persons with disabilities with hearing devices and with inserts to the hearing devices;
- Printing books with special letters for persons with sight disability, recording "audio books", as well as teaching them with the "Arev" system and providing them with computer technology;
- Rehabilitation, treatment of mental health as well as medical and social rehabilitation of persons with disabilities;
- Implementing programmes aimed at providing vocational education to persons with disabilities and promoting the employment thereof.

49. In 2010–2012 about 2,500 civil and community servants working in the field of social protection, have undergone mandatory training courses, the mandatory component whereof constitute the subjects on the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, organization of treatment to and communication with persons with disabilities, on other issues in the sphere of disability. This component constitutes (20-30 per cent) of similar courses. In addition, during the same time period, upon the order submitted by the MLSA of the Republic of Armenia, about 600 employees and representatives of non-governmental organizations dealing with issues of persons with disabilities and elderly persons, have undergone a 40-hour vocational training, which was entirely devoted to the issues of persons with disabilities. As a result, the majority of persons with disabilities will receive services based on better quality and personal needs.

50. For the purpose of realizing the rights of persons with disabilities as well as protecting and promoting the freedoms thereof, a system of bodies and organizations with relevant powers operates in the Republic, wherein local self-government bodies also play an important role. Thus, according to article 43 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On local self-governance" the head of a community exercises a mandatory power delegated by the State, related to the "organization of the activities of the social aid service within the community", as well as an optional power related to the "improvement of social conditions of persons with disabilities, families having lost their bread-winner, other socially disadvantaged groups".

51. The State attaches importance to the rights of persons with disabilities to education, employment, medical treatment, rehabilitation, information, communication, and considers them as subject to immediate implementation.

52. Issues related to ensuring the free movement of persons with disabilities, particularly, the adaptation of public buildings and constructions for persons with disabilities, is carried out by the State by certain stages. To this regard, the development of relevant legislative framework was carried out, but due to insufficiency of material resources and absence of precise mechanisms, the adaptation of the aforementioned buildings for persons with disabilities is far from being considered as sufficient.

53. According to article 27.1 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On legal acts" each newly adopted or supplemented draft legal act undergoes expert examination, as well as is posted on the Internet, as a result whereof each citizen of the Republic of Armenia, including persons with disabilities, may freely express their opinion on the legal act, recommend supplements and amendments thereto. Legal acts relating to issues of disability undergo expert assessment by the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities. However, it is worth mentioning that goal-oriented statistics is not available with regard to participation of women, children and girls with disabilities in the process of developing acts and policies on disability, as well as on gender and age data of participating persons with disabilities.

54. Existing legal acts in the Republic of Armenia as well as those drafted do not provide for measures which will promote the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities more than provided for under the requirements of the Convention.

55. The provisions of legal acts ensuring the requirements of the Convention, as well as the measures taken by the State for the resolution of issues of persons with disabilities, equally extend to the whole territory of the Republic of Armenia, including the city of Yerevan, as well as the marzes.

56. The consolidated comparable statistical data on the effectiveness of anti-discrimination measures in the Republic of Armenia and on ensuring progress in the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities (including in respect of gender and age) as envisaged by the Convention, are not complete. Some statistical data on ensuring progress in the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities are presented per fields (education, employment) in relevant sections.

Part II. Special rights

Article 5 – Equality and non-discrimination

57. Equality of people before the law, as well as non-discrimination are defined by article 14.1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, which reads as follows: "All human beings shall be equal before the law". Discrimination based on sex, race, skin colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion, ideology, political or other views, membership to a national minority, property status, birth, disability, age or other personal or social circumstances shall be prohibited".

58. According to article 32 of the Constitution of the republic of Armenia, "Everyone shall have the freedom to choose occupation. Every worker shall have the right to a just remuneration not lower than the minimum laid down by law, as well as to working conditions meeting the safety and hygiene requirements", whereas according to article 37, "Everyone shall have the right to social security in cases of old-age, disability, sickness, loss of bread-winner, unemployment and other cases provided for by law". The provisions

for maintaining equality and non-discrimination are laid down also in the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social assistance", Law of the Republic of Armenia "On allowances", and in other legal acts. The provisions defined by these laws may not reduce or restrict the requirements defined by the Constitution.

59. The principle of equality and non-discrimination is laid down in the preamble of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia", which read as follows: "Legal, economic and organizational fundamentals of social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia, the basic provisions of State policy on providing more favourable conditions and privileges for the realization of rights and abilities of persons with disabilities for the purpose of ensuring opportunities for them on an equal basis with other citizens of the Republic".

60. In article 4 of the Draft Law of the Republic of Armenia "On the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and social inclusion thereof in the Republic of Armenia" is included "non-discrimination against persons with disabilities and accessibility of all spheres of social life" as the main principle of social policy in the process of protecting the rights of persons with disabilities and the social inclusion thereof.

61. Upon the Decision of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia of 25 February 2008 the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities was created and is now operating, one of the most important purposes of the activities whereof is to ensure equal rights and equal opportunities and non-discrimination based on disability. The creation, competences and powers of the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities are laid down in the Draft Law (introduced into legislative framework).

62. The position of an advocate for persons with disabilities, which was opened since 2011 within the Staff to the Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, also contributes to the ensuring of equal rights and equal opportunities as well as non-discrimination for persons with disabilities.

Article 8 – Awareness-raising

63. The principle of awareness-raising is included in article 48 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia: As "the main tasks of the State in the economic, social and cultural spheres" it defines the "implementation of programmes for the prevention and treatment of disability, promotion of participation of persons with disabilities in social life".

64. Increase of the level of awareness is also guaranteed by article 16 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia" — "Ensuring the freedom to receive information for persons with disabilities". According to this article "The State shall ensure the freedom to receive information for persons with disabilities".

65. The State accepts the sign language as means for providing personal communication, education and translation services.

66. Ensuring education through Braille system for persons with sight impairments, the availability of hearing appliances and large prints, including supplementary education through the Braille system for persons having lost their sight at an older age, is guaranteed.

67. A teaching system for easy understanding of the language is organized for persons with mental impairments. Technical means of communication are provided to persons with speech impairments.

68. Television companies established by State administration bodies and local self-government bodies, ensure, within the air time provided for by law, the broadcasting of

children's and news television programmes with sign language interpretation. However, it is worth mentioning that the aforementioned requirement of the Law is not fully met.

69. In line with the provisions of the Convention, the requirement of ensuring awareness is laid down in the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On freedom of information in the Republic of Armenia" adopted in 2003. Particularly, article 4 of the Law defines the "protection of the freedom to seek and receive information" and "ensuring of the accessibility of providing information" as main principles for ensuring freedom of information. Meanwhile, article 6 of the same Law defines the exercise of the freedom of information, according which "Everyone shall have the right to familiarize himself or herself with the information he or she has sought and/or apply, as prescribed by law, to the information holder with a request of receiving that information, and to receive this information.".

70. The principle of preparation and publication of social advertisement provided for by article 13 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On advertisement" also contributes to the increase of effectiveness of awareness-raising, according which "The advertising entity shall be obliged to provide, as a priority, not less that 5 per cent of the annual air time (printing surface area) — allocated for advertisements — to social advertisements representing national interests in public health and healthcare, environmental protection, social protection matters, and not having commercial nature. The orders for the distribution of social advertisements shall be submitted by the ministries, departments, territorial administration bodies and local self-government bodies of the Republic of Armenia, as well as by non-State organizations. The production and distribution costs of social advertisements shall be covered at the expense of the advertiser's funds".

71. For the purpose of increasing the level of legal knowledge of the population, acquiring by citizens of knowledge on law, particularly relevant knowledge on issues relating to disability, measures are taken in the Republic of Armenia at different educational levels. Thus, for the purpose of forming on the part of children respect towards persons with disabilities, as well as increasing the level of knowledge of children in the field of law, courses on social issues and fundamentals of law are planned and conducted in high schools (10th, 11th and 12th forms).

72. Relevant courses on law and social sphere are also conducted at all levels of vocational education.

73. The training courses, related to the field of law, for public service, particularly, for civil servants, are also considered as an important process for awareness-raising. As a mandatory component of training, courses relating to the topics on "Gender Issues" and "Human Rights" are conducted, with 72-hour load for each thereof. Within the framework of these courses, topics on the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, constitute the significant part of these courses.

74. The other important component for awareness-raising is the organization of courses and seminars on awareness amongst persons with disabilities, as a result whereof, persons with disabilities learn their rights and granted privileges more completely. Similar courses are organized by different non-governmental organizations, as well as in general education schools, primary vocational and middle-level vocational education establishments where inclusive education is applied.

75. Within the framework of awareness-raising measures, each year seminars are organized for parents on the topics on "Skills for parenthood", which are aimed at informing of the peculiarities of education of children in need of special conditions of education. Such planned seminars were held in 2010–2012 by several non-governmental organizations. Employees of the MLSA of the Republic of Armenia have also participated in the seminars organized by "Bridge of Hope" non-governmental organization both in

Yerevan and in marzes. The effectiveness of such measures, with regard to the development of skills and abilities of parents, is quite high.

76. The meetings with persons with disabilities, the non-governmental organizations thereof and mass media organized regularly by the medical and social expertise and employment agencies of the MLSA of the Republic of Armenia and by the territorial bodies thereof, also promote the awareness-raising.

77. Since 2008, each year — from 15 November till 15 December, the MLSA of the Republic of Armenia and the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities have been declaring a month of awareness-raising on issues relating to disability. Within the framework of declared month, seminars, round tables, discussions, press conferences, walking campaigns, television programmes and other various and diverse events are organized. Within the framework of this programme, large groups of the public are informed of the issues of persons with disabilities, of the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as of the new approaches for determining disability, stemming from the Convention.

78. In 2010–2011 working groups composed of employees of the MLSA of the Republic of Armenia held conferences in Yerevan and in all marzes of the Republic with regard to clarification of the provisions of the Convention, wherein participated the heads of marzes, local self-government bodies, employees of the social sector, representatives from the public sector, journalists and others. The meetings were widely highlighted by local mass media outlets.

79. Since 2010, each year the MLSA of the Republic of Armenia, together with non-governmental organizations, has been holding the "Best journalistic work" contest within the frameworks whereof a prize is granted for the preparation of the best television and radio programmes, publication of the best articles relating to the field of disability. We may note that the number of journalists applying for and taking part in the contest increases by years.

80. For the purpose of highlighting the issues relating to the field of disability and recommending solutions, since March 2008 the departmental programme series on "Social dialogue time" of the MLSA of the Republic of Armenia is broadcast throughout the territory of the Republic on a television channel having mainstream audience, which among other social issues refers to the social inclusion of persons with disabilities, improvement of life and informing of the rights thereof. The Minister of Labour and Social Issues of the Republic of Armenia, deputy ministers, heads of non-governmental organizations, social partners have been invited to the programme for many times.

81. On 14 to 18 August 2012, a training was conducted by an international expert, the purpose whereof was to provide specialists and officials of the Republic of Armenia with relevant knowledge and skills, for using the methodology of international classification of functions, as well as for conducting a situational analysis on disability. Specialists from the MLSA of the Republic of Armenia, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia, Ministry of Healthcare of the Republic of Armenia, from "Bridge of Hope" NGO dealing with the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia, as well as from the Armenian branch of the "Mission East" Danish relief and development organization have participated in the training. Due to the training, the knowledge acquired by the specialists will be more effectively used for conducting research. Particularly: the formulated expert group has developed a relevant questionnaire (tool) through which surveys, data analyses and summarization are carried out, using the principles and methodology of the ICF. As a result, the special needs of children and adults with disabilities and problems will be revealed, the degree of the limitations thereof will be

determined, which will enable to determine also the disability threshold. The research started in September 2012 and is conducted in the region of Ijevan of Tavush marz.

82. The "www.mss.am" website of the MLSA of the Republic of Armenia and the "www.disabilityarmenia.am" website specially created in 2010, provide accessible information on the issues of the field of disability, on the rights of persons with disabilities, legal framework regulating the field concerned, as well as on the implemented programmes.

Article 9 – Accessibility

83. For the purpose of social inclusion of persons with disabilities the first precondition proves to be the accessibility of the environment, which implies the ensuring of favourable conditions which will enable the persons with disabilities to actively avail of the infrastructure, means of transportation, as well as to receive information they are interested in.

84. The principles of ensuring accessibility are included in the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia".

85. According to articles 21, 24 and 27 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia", within the framework of the State policy on the objects of social infrastructure the authorities of State power and public administration bodies of the Republic of Armenia, all employers (State and non-State) operating within the territory of the Republic of Armenia are obliged to "ensure accessibility of objects, residential, public, industrial buildings and constructions of social infrastructure, create conditions for unrestricted use of public transport and means of transport communication, connection and information, places for rest and entertainment". This requirement extends to both urban and rural communities. For the purpose of ensuring accessibility, according to article 22 of the same Law, the planning and construction of residential areas, if they are not adjusted for the accessibility and use by persons with disabilities, are not permitted.

86. For the purpose of ensuring accessible conditions for persons with disabilities, the Government of the Republic of Armenia has approved the procedure for "Ensuring accessibility of social, transportation and engineering infrastructures for persons with disabilities and groups of population with low mobility". According to this procedure, the traffic and pedestrian lanes of streets, underground and overground crossings, areas adjoining buildings and constructions, public recreation places, sports and children's playgrounds must be furnished with necessary ramps and special appliances, as well as with warning light, audio and other installations.

87. Ensuring of accessibility, in addition to the Government of the Republic of Armenia, is also conferred on local self-government bodies.

88. According to article 43 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On local self-governance", the activities of the head of a community in the field of labour and social service are considered as: "taking measures towards improving the social conditions of persons with disabilities, families having lost their bread-winner, other socially disadvantaged groups".

89. According to the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On local self-governance in the city of Yerevan", the powers of the mayor in the field of urban development and public utilities are defined as implementation of programmes for creating conditions in urban development objects for the free movement of persons with disabilities and groups of the population with low mobility. Within the framework of this programme, upon the

assignment of the Mayor of Yerevan, the Department for Transport of the City must take measures aimed at acquisition and intended use of trains adjusted for persons with disabilities, as well as must take measures aimed at acquiring equipment designed for serving persons with disabilities, i.e. ramps, special elevators, as well as aimed at the installation thereof on buses designed (painted) for persons with disabilities. For this purpose, the 2013 Budget of the city of Yerevan provides for 25 million Drams.

90. During last years, certain works have been carried out in the field of planning activities aimed at ensuring accessibility for the groups of population with low mobility in the environment of urban development. Having regard to more active field of activities, these were mainly carried out in capital city Yerevan. The architectural-planning assignments issued by Yerevan municipality also include special requirements to this regard (for example, residential and trade-community complex on Arshakunyats avenue, multi-apartment buildings on Keru, Mamikonyants, Demirtchyan, Arami and other streets).

91. From the projects may be pointed out objects such as the residential building constructed in the corner of Hanrapetutyan and Byuzand streets, the business centre on Khorenatsi street, the underground crossings at the crossroads of Nalbandyan-Isahakyan-Alek Manukyan, Vardanants-Khanjyan streets. The notable work carried out in the construction sector is obvious particularly with regard to the streets and pedestrian crossings of Yerevan, which are adjusted to a possible extent for citizens with wheelchairs (though the defined urban development norms were not always observed, which hinders the independent movement of persons with disabilities). Very few administrative buildings may be pointed out from the point of ensuring the movement of persons with disabilities availing of wheelchairs, but the works are launched to this regard. In 2010–2012, Yerevan municipality built entrance ramps for persons with disabilities near 12 polyclinics and 8 administrative and public buildings.

92. For the implementation of point 5 of article 55, point 4 of article 57 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On local self-governance in the city of Yerevan", the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia", the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 392-N of 16 March 2006 "On approving the procedure for ensuring accessibility of social, transportation and engineering infrastructures for persons with disabilities and groups of population with low mobility", and the Decision of the Mayor of Yerevan No. 1634-A of 26 March 2009 "On creating conditions in newly built and existing urban development objects for the free movement of persons with disabilities and groups of population with low mobility", the programme for ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities and groups of population with low mobility in Yerevan was approved upon the Decision of the Mayor of Yerevan No. 4562 of 13 June 2012. The organization of and responsibility for the implementation (ensuring that measures are taken) of this Decision was reserved to the sub-divisions of the Staff of Yerevan Municipality. For the purpose of ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities, a task was assigned also to electoral commissions which, by virtue of their actions, must ensure the unrestricted participation of persons with disabilities in the election process. Article 15 of the Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia lays down the following provision according which: "For the purpose of ensuring the accessibility of the exercise of the right to suffrage by electors with limited physical capacity, local self-government bodies shall undertake appropriate measures in polling stations".

93. Any national programme ensuring accessibility, with respective implementation timelines and indicators, is not available in the Republic of Armenia, which is provided for and envisaged in the developed Draft Law. The actual implementation of the provisions of regulatory legal acts aimed at ensuring accessibility, due to the lack of relevant mechanisms and necessary financial means, is not fully carried out especially in the sphere of urban development where the provision of accessibility is far from being considered as sufficient.

94. However, it is worth mentioning that the accessibility norms defined by the regulatory legal acts of the Republic of Armenia, create an important precondition for ensuring the level of accessibility in the country.

Article 10 – Right to life

95. The fundamental provision on the right to life, referred to in the Convention, is laid down in article 15 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, according which "Everyone shall have the right to life. No one may be sentenced to death penalty or be executed". This provision refers to all citizens, including persons with disabilities.

96. The fundamental provision on the right to life is also laid down in Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia, the article 49 whereof defines the types of punishment, *i.e.* penalty, deprivation of the right to hold certain positions or engage in certain activities, public works, deprivation of special or military rank, category, degree or qualification class, confiscation of property, detention, confinement in disciplinary battalion, fixed-term imprisonment, life imprisonment. From the types of punishment previously defined, "death penalty" was abolished in 2006, and at present the Criminal Code does not provide for such punishment.

97. All citizens of the Republic of Armenia, including persons with disabilities, are protected against being imposed the punishment of arbitrary deprivation of life. The Civil Code of the Republic of Armenia also prohibits to subject people to medical and scientific experiments without their consent.

Article 11 – Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies

98. The basis for the legislation on regulating emergency situations is the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, according which, in the event of violent overthrow of the constitutional order, as well as at the time of martial law, the President of the Republic of Armenia, consulting with the Chairperson of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, may declare state of emergency in the country in respect of which the legal regime shall be established under the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On legal regime of state of emergency" (adopted in 2012). The definition of the legal regime of state of emergency is aimed at ensuring the security of the citizens at the time of natural disasters, technical accidents, epidemics, as well as protecting human rights and freedoms, where mass violations of public order take place, and a danger for violent overthrow of the constitutional order arises.

99. Upon the decisions of the Government of the Republic of Armenia and relevant legislation based on the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On the protection of the population during emergency situations", a single State system is provided for the prevention of technical and natural disasters, implementation of relevant measures in case of emergence thereof. This system comprises State and local self-government bodies, State and non-State organizations with relevant human and material resources thereof. Meanwhile, this system includes structures which conduct permanent monitoring of natural and technical situations, which is aimed at preventing the occurrence of such situations, reducing human and material losses. This Law also defines the rights and obligations of citizens during emergency situations.

100. The Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 1180-N of 18 August 2011 "On approving the procedure for evacuating the population from dangerous areas" defines the main issues related to the evacuation of the population during

emergency situations and marital law, the organization and implementation thereof. Point 2 of this Procedure refers to the evacuation of persons with disabilities.

101. Within the system of the Ministry of Emergency Situations operates a Crisis Management Centre, where relevant information bases are centralized, including information on distribution of persons with disabilities as of territories. In case of receipt of emergency calls by the Ministry of Emergency Situations, the Crisis Centre is capable to exactly find out the number of persons with disabilities in the dangerous area, the distribution thereof, and develops relevant measures — based thereon — in order to assist persons with disabilities. The construction works on the new building of the Crisis Management Centre of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Armenia are coming to an end, which is fully adapted to all conditions of work for persons with disabilities. It is planned to create 25 to 30 workplaces for the latter. In November 2012 the MLSA of the Republic of Armenia submitted to the Ministry of Emergency Situations the list of job seeking persons with disabilities mainly with movement difficulties, in order to organize relevant trainings and later provide them with employment.

102. The "Seismic Protection Service" agency of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Armenia and the State Academy of Crisis Management often organize courses in Yerevan and marzes, where persons with disabilities are also involved.

103. The concepts of "risk situation" and "humanitarian emergency situation" are not available in the legislation of the Republic of Armenia. Meanwhile, it should be mentioned that during the last ten years natural and technical disasters within the Republic of Armenia occurred on a small scale, and the number of citizens having acquired disability as well as the number of those died as a result of thereof is very small and does not constitute substantial specific weight.

Article 12 – Equal recognition before the law

104. Equal recognition before the law is enshrined by a number of articles of Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia which imply equality in terms of the rights of "personal liberty and security", "exclusion of torture, as well as inhuman or degrading treatment", "respect for private and family life", "freedom of thought, conscience and religion", "freedom of expression and opinion", "right to rest and leisure, education, medical care".

105. Grounds for implementing the requirements of the Convention are laid down in the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, pursuant to which every citizen, including a disabled person, has the right to protect his or her rights and freedoms through judicial procedure, as well as through other means not prohibited by law. A citizen is free to avail himself or herself to receive legal assistance; moreover in some cases such assistance may be financed from State funds.

106. With regard to safeguarding the property of citizens, including that of the persons with disabilities article 31 of the Constitution lays down the following provision: "Everyone shall have the right to possess, use, dispose of, and bequeath his or her property at his or her discretion. No one may be deprived of property, except through judicial procedure in cases provided for by law. Intellectual property shall be protected by law." Article 33.1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia states "Everyone shall have the right to engage in entrepreneurial activity not prohibited by law". Moreover, while being engaged in entrepreneurial activity, every person, including the person with disabilities, may receive bank loans in accordance with the established procedure and use them for his or her activity".

107. Pursuant to the Civil Code of the Republic of Armenia the civil capacity of a person may be restricted only through judicial procedure, if a person suffers such mental disorders which significantly affect his or her ability to realize the meaning of his or her actions. It is envisaged to have a court-appointed custodian for natural persons with limited mental capacity, and the persons with limited mental capacity reserve the right to independently perform minor household transactions. Larger transactions, pertaining to persons with limited mental capacity, are performed by an immediate participation of the custodian, under his or her control and to his or her knowledge. In some cases, a person may be recognized as mentally incapacitated by the court based on a medical opinion. In this case, the citizen may not individually perform any transaction. All types of transactions are performed by the custodian.

108. The safeguards to prevent abuse against persons with disabilities by decision-makers are conditioned by the provisions of regulatory legal acts, the availability of relevant supervision mechanisms controlled and monitored by law enforcement bodies and NGOs.

109. In the Republic of Armenia regular training (long-term and short-term) are being conducted for the civil and community servants, employees of the organizations dealing with issues of persons with disabilities, as well as in the educational institutions carrying out primary, secondary or general education programmes, during which the participants are informed of the issues of equality of the persons with disabilities before the law.

Article 13 – Access to Justice

110. The law does not prescribe any restrictions for persons with disabilities with regard to participation in judicial proceedings. Persons with disabilities participate in all judicial procedures on an equal basis.

111. To ensure full participation in judicial procedures, as well as to enable full exercise of their rights and responsibilities, the court buildings of the Republic of Armenia are being adjusted for persons with disabilities. Thus, 37 out of 48 court buildings have ramps and environment accessible to persons with disabilities. The activities were mainly carried out in 2010–2012.

112. Educational programmes on the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities are being conducted for the staff of the system of justice. A similar large-scale training programme was conducted in 2012, where up to 40 per cent of the staff of the system participated.

113. Any legal arrangement with regard to effective access to justice for persons with disabilities (as a witness, defendant, aggrieved) was not provided, since legal acts ensuring access to justice provide for equal access to justice for all persons, including persons with disabilities and exclude any discrimination on the ground of disability.

114. No specific arrangements are provided either, which will ensure the access to justice in terms of age (children and youth), since in this regard the access to justice both for persons with and without disabilities are considered on an equal basis, and any discrimination on the ground of disability is excluded.

115. A law has been drafted, which includes provisions on ensuring accessible and adjusted conditions for persons with disabilities in confinement facilities. It is also envisaged that persons with disabilities in the confinement facilities have the right to humane treatment and respect for their human dignity, receive accessible and unimpeded information on the reasons and conditions of his or her arrest, detention or deprivation of liberty, receive unimpeded and accessible legal, medical and social and psychological and

other necessary aid. It is prescribed that the procedure for determining disability in confinement facilities should be defined by the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

116. With the view to ensure access to justice, point 31 of the approved procedure for carrying out medical and social expertise by the Government of the Republic of Armenia stipulates that a person for the protection of his or her rights, has the right to appeal expert opinions, action or inaction of a competent State body in the field of medical and social expertise both through administrative and judicial procedure. It should be mentioned that courts of different instances examined such 23 cases in 2010–2011.

Article 14 – Liberty and security of the person

117. Article 16 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia lays down "Everyone shall have the right to personal liberty and security. A person may be deprived of liberty in cases and as prescribed by law". The persons with disabilities enjoy the right to liberty and security on an equal basis with others, are not deprived of their liberty unlawfully and disability may not constitute a ground for release from liability.

118. Additional measures are being planned for the persons with disabilities for more effective protection of their rights. Thus, starting from 1 January 2013 persons having 1st and 2nd degree of disability will be provided pro bono legal aid in civil, administrative matters, as well as preparation of their documents to be filed with the court will be done and consultancy will be provided free of charge.

119. Article 112 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia states that "Every person deprived of liberty shall be promptly informed about the reasons in a language understandable to him or her and, in case a criminal charge is brought, about the charge as well. Every person deprived of liberty shall have the right to promptly inform thereon the person of his or her choosing. When an arrested person is not detained upon a court decision within seventy-two hours from the moment of arrest, he or she shall be subject to a prompt release". The same article of the Constitution also states that "A person may not be deprived of liberty merely on the ground of inability to fulfil civil-law obligations". No one may be subjected to search in cases and manner other than those prescribed by law.

120. Article 1 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On police" lays down that "The Police is a body operating within the system of the authorized public administration body of internal affairs, which is called to protect human life and health, as well as other rights and freedoms, property, the public and State interests against criminal and other unlawful encroachments". Meanwhile, article 5 of the same Law states that "The Police shall protect the human life and health, as well as rights and freedoms, property, legal interests of any person against criminal and other encroachments, regardless of their citizenship, race, sex, language, nationality, religion, political or other views, social origin, property or other status, membership in any party or organization".

121. Article 6 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On national security bodies" lays down that "The operations of the National Security Bodies shall be based on the principles of lawfulness, democracy, equality before the law, respect for and protection of human and civil rights and freedoms", and article 7 states that "While carrying out operations by national security bodies, human and civil rights and freedoms shall be guaranteed. Human and civil rights and freedoms may not be restricted, except for the cases provided for by the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Armenia.

122. At the same time it should be noted that persons with disabilities detained in penitentiary institutions enjoy the same rights as persons with disabilities in liberty, except for those restricted by deprivation of liberty. They may undergo medical and social expert examination, re-examination in MSE Agency on an equal basis with others and receive the

safeguards provided by the State. It is worth mentioning that in recent years the number of persons with disabilities deprived of liberty is small and for that reason there is no statistics on such persons.

Article 15 – Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

123. Pursuant to article 17 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia "No one shall be subjected to torture, or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Arrested, detained persons and those deprived of liberty shall have the right to humane treatment and respect for dignity. No one may be subjected to scientific, medical or other experiments without his or her consent".

124. Article 119 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia lays down that torture of any person, if it has not resulted in grave or medium gravity bodily injury, shall be punished by imprisonment for a maximum term of three years, whereas in case of repeated torture or torture against several persons or where torture resulted in grave or medium gravity bodily injury it is punished by imprisonment for a maximum term of 3 to 7 years. At the same time, article 127 of the same Code prescribes relevant punishments for cases where a person without his or her consent is subjected to scientific, medical or other experiments. In such cases imprisonment for a term of 2 to 6 years is prescribed, as well as in certain cases administrative penalties are imposed.

Article 16 – Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse

125. The Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia provides for punishments of different nature for exploitation, violence towards a person. Article 132 of the Code prescribes relevant punishments for trafficking and exploitation in human beings, article 133 — for unlawful deprivation of liberty, article 131 — for kidnapping, article 118 — for battery. Some punishments are prescribed also for parents who consciously induce their children to engage in beggary.

126. Fight against family violence is also an important measure against violence and insult. This phenomenon is criminalized by the legislation of the Republic of Armenia and is punished irrespective of the consequences of violence (grave, medium-gravity or light bodily injury) and types of inflicting violence (intentional, unintentional).

127. The functions of preventing family violence are conferred upon a number of organizations. Particularly, State policy drafting function is conferred upon the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of the Republic of Armenia; the operational response and prevention functions — on the units of the Police; the protection of the rights of the children — on the childcare institutions; in terms of social protection — on a number of specialized organizations, which are engaged in medical and social rehabilitation of the victims of violence, provide psychological assistance and other services, as a result of which the consequences of family violence are overcome.

128. There is no statistics on persons with disabilities who have been subjected to violence, and it is difficult to figure out the number of persons with disabilities among the victims of violence. However, persons with disabilities have equal opportunities to be engaged in the rehabilitation programmes together with all other persons subjected to violence.

129. For the purpose of protection of the rights of elderly and citizens with disabilities, exclusion of violence and discrimination towards them, the Ministry of Labour and Social

Issues of the Republic of Armenia pays regular visits, conducts surveys, considers complaints in social protection institutions of population operating 24 hours, in day-care centres, while providing in-house care and social services. The activities are carried out together with international and local NGOs, namely Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Vanadzor Office, which is one of the organizations operating actively in this field in Armenia.

130. This organization, by frequent visits to different social protection institutions, identifies issues regarding respect for and protection of human rights, proper conduct towards elderly people and persons with disabilities who are under the care of such institutions. No violence cases against persons under the care of the mentioned institutions have been administered.

131. The staff of the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of the Republic of Armenia participated in the discussions organized by Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Vanadzor Office, particularly on the issues relating to the conformity of actual state of care and social services in nursing homes to the established standards, as well as on the issues of protection of the rights of persons having mental health problems in closed and semi-closed institutions and cases of violence towards them. At the same time, all the letters addressed by Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Vanadzor Office to the Ministry, as well as applications of the citizens have always been responded and clarifications have been provided by the Ministry in duly and timely manner.

Article 17 – Protecting the integrity of the person

132. Chapter 15 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia regulates the cases of imposing medical coercive measures, particularly compulsory medical treatment, rendering psychiatric assistance, undergoing treatment in special health-care institutions. Medical coercive measures may be imposed by a court decision, if a person has committed a crime in the state of mental incapacity, limited mental capacity or under the influence of mental disease.

133. Pursuant to article 11 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On medical services to the population": "A person suffering from a disease harmful for the environment shall have the right to receive free-of-charge medical care and services guaranteed by the State and for that purpose undergo treatment in the institutions rendering specialized medical care and services".

134. Article 2 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On transplantation of human organs and tissues" prohibits monetary compensation for transplantation. At the same time the advertisement of transplantation of human organs or tissues is prohibited. Article 6 of the same Law states: "A natural person whose organs and/or tissues should be transplanted for medical purposes shall give his or her written consent for transplantation. If the patient is a minor, the consent of his or her parents or custodians shall be required". Article 11 of the same Law states that a citizen may not be a donor if he or she is recognized as a person with disabilities, in accordance with the established procedure.

135. The Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia in its turn provides for different punishments for violation of the procedures of transplantation of human organs and/or tissues. Such punishments are imprisonment for a term of 2 to 8 years or administrative penalties.

136. The Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia (article 122) provides for relevant punishments for illegal or forced abortion, as well as forced sterilization whether the person concerned (woman, girl, man) is with disabilities or not. The above-mentioned provisions relate also to persons with disabilities.

Article 18 – Liberty of movement and nationality

137. The legislation of the Republic of Armenia does not provide for any restriction of the liberty of movement and nationality on the basis of disability. Thus, second part of article 3 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia lays down that "The State shall ensure the protection of fundamental human and citizen's rights and freedoms, in conformity with the principles and norms of international law." Article 14.1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia classifies the disability to such conditions based on which the discrimination is prohibited.

138. The right of persons lawfully staying within the Republic of Armenia /including Armenian citizens, foreign citizens, stateless persons, refugees/ to liberty of movement and freedom to choose their residence is guaranteed by article 25 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, according to which everyone lawfully staying within the Republic of Armenia shall have the right to move freely and choose a place of residence within the territory of the Republic of Armenia. Everyone shall have the right to leave the Republic of Armenia. Every citizen and everyone enjoying the right to reside in the Republic of Armenia shall have the right to return to the Republic of Armenia. The relations pertaining to entry to the Republic of Armenia, staying and residing within the Republic of Armenia, transit travel through the Republic of Armenia, exit from the Republic of Armenia of foreigners and stateless persons are regulated by the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On foreigners" and by other legal acts / regarding the issue of obtaining an entry visa — by the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 1268-N of 7 February 2008/.

139. The relations pertaining to the right of refugees, who have obtained asylum in the Republic of Armenia, as well as of asylum seekers to freely choose a place of residence and freely move within the territory of the Republic of Armenia, to leave the Republic of Armenia are governed by the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On refugees and asylum".

140. Relations pertaining to entry permit to the Republic of Armenia and exit permit from the Republic of Armenia of persons are regulated by the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On State border", according to article 25 of which, the entry/exit/ of persons on the State border crossing points is carried out by the permit of border troops upon availability of relevant documents, as well as by the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On border guard troops", according to article 7(1)(j) of which at the border zone (level) and on border crossing points, the border guard troops shall have the right to ban the persons to cross the State border without relevant documents permitting the entry into or exit from the Republic of Armenia until the documents entitling to cross the State border are proper formulated or until the circumstances of losing the documents are clarified.

141. According to the above-mentioned laws, disability is not considered to be a restricting or deteriorating factor for the persons to exercise their rights/including while obtaining entry visa or residence status, moving within the territory of the Republic of Armenia, entering to or exiting from the territory of the Republic of Armenia.

142. With regard to citizenship, article 30.1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia lays down the grounds for the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia, according to which "A child born to the citizens of the Republic of Armenia shall be a citizen of the Republic of Armenia". Every child — one of whose parents is a citizen of the Republic of Armenia — shall have the right to citizenship of the Republic of Armenia. The procedure for acquisition and termination of the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia shall be prescribed by law. No one may be deprived of the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia, nor of the right to change the citizenship. A citizen of the Republic of Armenia may not be extradited to a foreign State, except for cases provided for by international treaties ratified by the Republic of Armenia. Rights and responsibilities of persons holding dual citizenship shall be prescribed by law".

143. The procedure for acquisition and termination of the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia is defined by the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On citizenship of the Republic of Armenia". Particularly, article 12 of the mentioned Law states that a child born in the Republic of Armenia, whose parents are stateless persons, shall acquire the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia.

144. Pursuant to article 13, any person not holding the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia, who has attained the age of 18 and has active working capacity, shall have the right to apply for acquiring the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia, if he or she:

- Has been permanently residing in the Republic of Armenia for the last three years as prescribed by law;
- May express himself or herself in Armenian;
- Is familiar with the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia.

145. Pursuant to article 16, a child of parents having acquired the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia shall acquire the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia. Where one of the parents acquires the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia, while the other is a foreign citizen or a stateless person, their child shall acquire the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia, if the written consent of the parents is available, or if the child resides in the Republic of Armenia and the consent of the parent holding the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia is available.

146. Pursuant to article 18, a child adopted by citizens of the Republic of Armenia shall acquire the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia. If one of the spouses having adopted a child is a stateless person, while the other is a citizen of the Republic of Armenia, the child shall acquire the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia.

147. Pursuant to article 24, any citizen of the Republic of Armenia, who has attained the age of 18, shall have the right to change the citizenship, *i.e.*, to abandon the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia and to acquire the citizenship of another State.

148. The application of a citizen on abandoning the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia shall be rejected, if:

- Criminal prosecution is instigated against him or her;
- He or she is subject to a criminal or civil judgment of a court, which has taken legal effect and is subject to enforcement;
- His or her abandoning the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia contravenes the national security interests of the Republic of Armenia;
- He or she has unfulfilled obligations before the State.

149. The analysis of the above-mentioned legislative provisions implies that while dealing with the issues of acquiring or abandoning the citizenship of the Republic of Armenia, the disability may in no case be a restricting or predetermining condition.

150. For the implementation of the Convention, the Republic of Armenia has concluded a number of international treaties, which are aimed at protection of the rights and freedoms of persons with disabilities. Thus, one of the directions of cooperation established in the Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Labour and Social Protection concluded between the Governments of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Bulgaria in 2012 is to ensure equal rights and opportunities for persons with disabilities.

151. The second article of the memorandum of understanding concluded between the Governments of the Republic of Armenia and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 2011 on cooperation in the fields of labour and social issues states that the Parties will contribute to

the development and enhancement of the cooperation in the field of labour and social issues between two countries.

152. It should be also noted that the law does not foresee any discrimination with regard to State registration of the birth of a child, and children with disabilities are not anyhow differentiated; thus the birth of a child with disabilities is registered and he or she acquires a name and citizenship on an equal basis with others according to the current legislation of the Republic of Armenia.

Article 19 – Living independently and being included in the community

153. Article 27.1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia states that "Everyone shall have the right to file requests or recommendations with competent State and local self-government bodies and officials, with a view to protecting his or her private or public interests, and to receive an appropriate answer within a reasonable period".

154. Article 33.2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia lays down that "Everyone shall have the right to live in an environment favourable to his or her health and welfare, as well as shall be obliged to preserve and improve the environment individually and in community with others".

155. Article 34 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia states that "Everyone shall have the right to adequate standard of living for himself or herself and his or her family, including the right to housing as well as the right to improvement of living conditions. The State shall undertake appropriate measures for the realization of this right of citizens".

156. For the effective inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community important steps are made on the regional level. Thus, through a number of TV channels of marzes (Tavush, Lori, Kotayk) and other mass media, as well as during seminar-discussions, the public is regularly informed of:

(a) The right of persons with disabilities to choose their place of residence on an equal basis with others;

(b) Access to in-home, community and other support services, including measures to prevent isolation from the community;

(c) Availability of community services and facilities for the general population on an equal basis to persons with disabilities.

157. To increase the effectiveness of inclusion, regional commissions in charge of issues of persons with disabilities have been established in all marzes, which, in the scope of their activities, actively cooperate with NGOs and donor organizations to ensure the implementation of various measures aimed at inclusion process in marzes.

158. In 2010–2012 measures are undertaken in marzes for improvement of the condition of persons with disabilities, recognition of their rights and implementation of opportunities. Information on some activities carried out in separate marzes is presented below:

(a) Aragatsotn marz:

- To meet the needs of a part of persons with disabilities in the marz, in-home care services are organized for them;
- Awareness raising campaigns are organized by NGOs of the marz, where persons with disabilities participate; "Astghavard" Disabled Children's Parents NGO successfully implements an annual vocational programme for children with disabilities, as a result of which children with disabilities receive preliminary

professional education and may be included in the community more effectively. In 2011, 60 such children received instruction.

(b) Armavir marz:

- Jointly with "Paros Lighthouse" charitable fund, meetings are organized to raise awareness of the parents of children with disabilities;
- Events dedicated to the international day of persons with disabilities are organized in the marz, which is a good occasion for dissemination of information, raising awareness of population.

(c) Lori marz:

- During provision of services in the marz, the first priority is to reveal and encourage the skills and abilities of persons with disabilities. Different NGOs are actively involved in the provision of such services;
- There are nursing charitable centres for elderly persons with disabilities. Among them is "Vanadzor Nursing Home", which takes care of 55 elderly people and "Bread of Life" charitable NGO with its "Home of Hope" sanatorium for elderly people, which takes care of 80 elderly persons. "Armenian Caritas" Charitable Non-Governmental Organization takes care of 160 elderly people in the marz, and charitable canteens of "Mission Armenia" organization host 480 persons with disabilities in need;
- "Viva-Cell-MTS" undertakes a unique and good initiative, which involves persons with disabilities in the field of public service, by organizing vocational training for them, and work placement.

(d) Shirak marz:

- The NGOs in the marz dealing with issues of persons with disabilities actively work towards inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community, ensuring conditions for them to live independently. Thus, "Armenian Caritas" Charitable Non-Governmental Organization carries out works with 30 children with multiple disabilities. The construction works of day care centres by the organization are in the process, which can host more than 100 persons with disabilities;
- The co-ordination and support of the programmes aimed at provision of social services to persons with disabilities occupy a major place in the implemented activities. Thus, "Armenian Caritas", "Pyunik", "Meghvik", "Araks", "Agat", "Ani" and other organizations provide different support services to around 1,600 persons with disabilities. The activities focused on the measures aimed at ensuring the effective participation of persons with disabilities in the public life.

(e) Syunik marz:

- One of the important steps is to create conditions to ensure the access of persons with disabilities to public buildings in the marz;
- In 2011 with the support of "World Vision" international benevolent organization and co-financed by Kapan community, "Children's Centre" for assistance of children was opened in Kapan city, which provides different services (psychological, legal, corrective, rehabilitation) to 80 children with disabilities of the community.

(f) Tavush marz:

- Within the framework of raising awareness of population on the issues of persons with disabilities, in December 2010, parent conference with a slogan "Let's join for

the sake of equal opportunities and together protect the interests of persons with disabilities" was organized in marzpetaran;

- Upon the initiative "Bridge of Hope" NGO and with the immediate support of marzpetaran, in 2010–2011 the centres for child and family support were created in all communities of the marzes to support the inclusion of persons with disabilities into the communities. Development trainings, art therapy, events, campaigns are organized in the centres. As a result of the activities of the centres the number of children applying to children's home and boarding care institutions significantly decreased in recent years in Tavush marz. The centres also organize parental care lessons for children with disabilities;

- At the initiative of the commission on persons with disabilities in the marz and marzpetaran, in 2011 jointly with "Paros" NGO a round table-discussion was organized on "Accessible elections for persons with disabilities", where representatives from "Noyastgh", "Progress", "Debed" and other NGOs, members of election commissions, representative of the communities participated. The information on the round-table discussions was uploaded on the website of the marz;

- To make the special rehabilitation medical services and specialized care for children with special needs more accessible in the marz, a "Child Development and Rehabilitation Centre" was established in Ijevan in 2008.

(g) Vayots Dzor marz:

- 88 persons with disabilities received sanatorium treatment, out of which 20 — mothers and children;

- All buildings and constructions build in recent 2 years in the marz have ramps and are adjusted for persons with disabilities;

- In 3 employment centres of the marz, 7 persons with disabilities have been included in "Salary Compensation" programme, and 4 persons with disabilities — in vocational instruction programmes;

- Within the framework of measures aimed at the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, city halls of Yeghegnadzor, Vayk and Jermuk organized round tables, legal counselling on employment and protection of rights;

- 5 persons with disabilities in the marz were elected to the council of elders of the community, and 20 persons are community servants;

- Persons with disabilities actively participate in the activities of the non-governmental organizations, they are involved in "Shushan", "Hope – 98", "Young Family Support Centre" and other NGOs. The activities carried out with persons with disabilities are covered in "Vardadzor" newspaper published in the marz.

159. It is important to provide persons with disabilities with relevant rehabilitation appliances aimed at ensuring the independent life and social inclusion thereof into the society. Given the long queues in 2001–2003 for the provision of prosthetics and rehabilitation appliances to persons with disabilities, the expenditures with regard to financing these services from the State Budget of the Republic of Armenia were sharply increased starting from 2004, as a result whereof the queues were eliminated. In 2006–2007 the financing continued to increase annually in average by around 5.7 per cent, the number of rehabilitation items provided to persons with disabilities increased in average by around 5.3 per cent. In 2008 and 2009 as well as in further years the focus was put on the enhancement of the variety of prosthetics and rehabilitation appliances and increase in the quality thereof. In 2009 and 2010 the budgetary allocations in respect of the above-mentioned issues were increased by 15.6 per cent as compared with previous years. In

2011–2013 within the framework of the programme on provision the persons with disabilities with prosthetic and orthopaedic appliances, technical means of rehabilitation and the rehabilitation thereof, it is planned to increase the expenditures each year by AMD 1 million (in 2010 — AMD 857.5 million). The increase of expenditures is conditioned by the increase in the demand of prosthetic and orthopaedic, rehabilitation appliances as well as the volume of repairs. The mentioned indicators are provided for in midterm expenditure framework of 2011–2013 which has been approved by the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

160. The availability of community services is also important for the independent life of persons with disabilities and the social inclusion thereof into the society, which enables to live in the family and community and participate in the life of relevant community. In recent years the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of the Republic of Armenia carries out works aimed at establishing community centres or supporting those already operating. In 2010–2012 AMD 710.8 million was allocated from the State Budget of the Republic of Armenia to NGOs aimed at organizing the works of community centres and in-home service works (AMD 508.4 million — to "Mission to Armenia" NGO, AMD 153.9 million — to "Bridge of Hope" NGO, AMD 49.5 million for "Prkutyun" NGO).

161. The community services aimed at outdoor rehabilitation of persons with mental health problems are important. In 2007 the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of the Republic of Armenia established a day care centre adjacent to "Psychological nursing home of Vardenis" SNCO at the expense of the State budget funds of the Republic of Armenia. The main objective of the Centre is the identification of persons with mental health problems, the rehabilitation and improvement of the quality of life thereof . The Centre provides services to the persons with mental health problems who need social and psychological assistance and mental health rehabilitation though their health condition is not such as to receive indoor treatment. The services of the Day Centre are provided both in the Centre (to 50 persons) and in house conditions.

162. Starting from 2007, funds are allocated from the State Budget of the Republic of Armenia to "Prkutyun" Youth Centre" NGO operating in the city of Yerevan. The main objective of the Centre is the integration of teenagers and young people with mental health problems and their families through the resolution of social, educational and health problems thereof.

163. The alternative model of the provision of care to persons with mental health problems in special establishments proves to be the "Jermik ankyun" centre wherein 15 young people are provided with care. The Centre provides social-psychological services to young people, teaches self-service skills thereto.

Article 20 – Personal mobility

164. The importance of ensuring personal mobility of persons with disabilities is laid down in article 5.1 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia", according which "The Government of the Republic of Armenia shall, in the sphere of social protection of persons with disabilities, establish the State standards for social services, technical means of rehabilitation, as well as the norms and rules ensuring the accessibility of the environment for vital activities for persons with disabilities.".

165. Article 7.1 of the same Law states that the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities shall include medical, vocational and social measures aimed at elimination or possible compensation of limitations in vital activities of the person with disability. Rehabilitation measures shall be carried out for the purpose of rehabilitating the health, capacity for work

and social status of a person with disability that contributes to material and social independence of the person with disability, to the comprehensive participation thereof in social life and to legal equality.".

166. The Law defines the concept of "the base programme on rehabilitation of persons with disabilities". The base programme is considered as a guaranteed list of minimum rehabilitation measures, services, technical and supplementary means provided to persons with disabilities free of charge, implemented at the expense of the State Budget.

167. The Law also defines the procedure and conditions for the provision of technical or other means to persons with disabilities and for the prostheties thereof. According to article 31 of the Law "In accordance with the procedure established by the Government of the Republic of Armenia persons with disabilities shall be entitled to order, repair and receive free-of-charge special prosthetic and orthopaedic shoes and all kinds of prosthetic items (except for the dental prosthesis made of expensive metals) at the expense of the State Budget of the Republic of Armenia and other means not prohibited by legislation". In 2010-2012, 48,840 prosthetic and orthopaedic services and technical means of rehabilitation were provided to all 34,430 persons with disabilities who were in need thereof. AMD 2.3 billion was allocated for that purpose from the State Budget.

168. The systems of traffic signs and signals ,designed for ensuring the mobility of persons with disabilities, is not widely applied in the Republic of Armenia. Such technical means used in some restricted areas in the city of Yerevan are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Article 21 – Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information

169. All citizens of the Republic of Armenia have equal rights and opportunities to express their opinion irrespective of the disability. This principle of equality and freedom of expression is enshrined in article 27 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia according which "Everyone shall have the right to freely express his or her opinion. It shall be prohibited to force a person to renounce his or her opinion or to change it. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of speech, including freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media, regardless of State frontiers. Freedom of media and other means of information shall be guaranteed. The State shall guarantee the existence and operation of independent public radio and television offering the diversity of information, educational, cultural and entertainment programmes.

170. The principle of freedom to receive information by persons with disabilities is also enshrined in article 16 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia" according which "The State shall ensure the freedom to receive information by persons with disabilities. The State shall consider the sign language as means of provision of personal communication, education and translation services. The education through Braille system, the availability of hearing appliances and large prints including supplementary education through Braille system of those having lost their sight at an older age is guaranteed for persons with sight impairments. Education system for easy understanding of the language is organized for persons with mental impairments. Technical communication means are provided to persons with speech impairments. Non-governmental organizations of persons with disabilities may at their own expense and within the framework of statutory goals thereof provide also other means for personal communication. Television and radio broadcasting companies established by the public administration bodies and local self-government bodies ensure,

within the air time provided for by law, the broadcasting of children's and news television programmes with sign language interpretation".

171. The principle of freedom of information of all citizens of the Republic of Armenia, including that of persons with disabilities, is also referred to in the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On freedom of information". According to article 6 of the Law, "Every person shall have the right to right to familiarize himself or herself with the information he or she has sought and/or apply, as prescribed by law, to the information holder with a request of receiving that information, and to receive this ." Article 12 of the same Law lays down the following provision: "In the field of ensuring the freedom of information, the information holder shall be obliged to ensure, as prescribed by law, the access to and publicity of information".

172. For the purpose of ensuring the access to information for persons with disabilities, article 5.1 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On television and radio" lays down the requirement of broadcasting the programmes with mandatory sign language interpretation or provision of Armenian subtitles. Pursuant to this article of the Law "The Public Television and Radio Company and private television companies operating in the Republic of Armenia, which broadcast also children's and/or news programmes, shall be obliged to ensure in their programmes the access to possible information for deaf and dumb public, to broadcast within daily air time at least one children's and news programme with sign language interpretation or provision of Armenian subtitles".

173. The article 5 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On television and radio" lays down the requirement on broadcasting programmes in a foreign language and on the language of broadcasting, in general. Thus, according to this article "The language of television and radio programmes broadcasted in the territory of the Republic of Armenia shall be deemed to be Armenian, except for the cases provided for by this Law. Television and radio companies shall be obliged to ensure the purity of the language of their programmes. Television and radio programmes, films, documentaries and cartoons in foreign languages, as well as the fragments (parts) of Armenian programmes in foreign languages shall be broadcast with simultaneous translation in Armenian — through audio reproduction or provision of subtitles".

174. Books accessible to persons with disabilities are published every year at the expense of the State Budget of the Republic of Armenia. In recent 3 years, AMD 10.5 million was allocated from the State Budget for the publication of such means of information.

Article 22 – Respect for privacy

175. The principles of privacy of the citizens of the Republic of Armenia, including the persons with disabilities, are enshrined in article 23 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, according to which "Everyone shall have the right to respect for his or her private and family life. No information — other than that provided for by law — concerning a person may be collected, kept, used or disseminated without his or her consent. Use and dissemination of information concerning a person shall be prohibited if it contradicts the purposes of collecting the information or is not provided for by law".

176. The same article of the Constitution also prescribes "the right to secrecy of correspondence, telephone conversations, mail, telegraph and other communications, which may be restricted only in cases and as prescribed by law, upon a court decision".

177. Article 24 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia prescribes that "Everyone shall have the right to inviolability of residence. It shall be prohibited to enter a person's residence against his or her will, except for cases provided for by law. A residence may be searched only in cases and as prescribed by law, upon a court decision".

178. The provisions of article 22(1) of the Convention are safeguarded by the legislation of the Republic of Armenia since the persons with disabilities enjoy the right for respect to personal life and inviolability on equal basis with others. No discrimination is prescribed towards persons with disabilities by the Constitution and any other legal act.

179. "The privacy of personal, health and rehabilitation information of persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others" of article 22(2) of the Convention is also ensured. Particularly, the Medical-Social Expertise Agency (MSE) makes online entries of the data on persons undergoing expertise in the "Pyunik" database which is highly protected. The secrecy of health and rehabilitation information on persons with disabilities is preserved. Such information is provided to the person if requested thereby, to other persons — upon his or her consent, and to judicial authorities — upon an inquiry.

180. Article 162 of the Civil Code of the Republic of Armenia prescribes that a person is entitled to "life and health, dignity, personal inviolability, private life inviolability, privacy of personal and family life".

181. The processing and dissemination of information on the citizens of the Republic of Armenia, including the persons with disabilities, is regulated by the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On personal data". In accordance with article 6 of that Law "Processing of personal data shall be deemed to be lawful if the personal data are processed with the consent of the data subject". This implies that the processing (collection, dissemination) of personal data, without the knowledge of the person with disabilities, is prohibited. The processing of personal data without the consent of the person in accordance with the above-mentioned law is possible in the following cases: "when the personal data is processed for the protection of data subject's critical interests; when processing of the personal data is envisaged by the legislation or is necessary for execution of law requirements; and when the personal data are processed for the protection of State and public security from immediate peril".

Article 23 – Respect for home and the family

182. In accordance with article 35 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia "The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of the society. Men and women of marriageable age shall have the right to marry and form a family with free expression of their will. They shall enjoy equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution." In accordance with article 36 of the Constitution "Parents shall have the right and responsibility to take care of upbringing, health, full and harmonious development and education of their children. Deprivation or restriction of parental rights may be exercised only by a court decision, in cases and as prescribed by law. Adult persons capable for work shall be obliged to take care of their parents who are incapable for work and are in need".

183. In accordance with article 1 of the Family Code of the Republic of Armenia "family legislation proceeds from the requirement of family strengthening, building of family relations on the basis of mutual love and respect, mutual assistance and responsibility of all the family members, inadmissibility of someone's voluntary interference into the family's issues, priority of child upbringing in the family, ensuring free exercise of the rights of family members, and the need for judicial protection of these rights". According to the same Code, "in order to conclude a marriage, mutual voluntary consent of a man and a woman and their marital age of eighteen are necessary".

184. Concurrently, the marriage with a legally incapable person is considered illegal and such marriages are prohibited by article 11 of the Code.

185. Article 24 of the Family Code of the Republic of Armenia stipulates for legal equality of spouses in the family, particularly, "each of the spouses is free in choosing a

job, occupation, profession and a place of residence. The spouses deal with the issues of maternity, paternity, rearing and education of a child, as well as other issues of family life proceeding from the principle of legal equality of spouses. The spouses are obliged to build their relations on the basis of mutual assistance and respect, contribute to the solidity of the family and take care for the well-being and development of their children." Concurrently, the same Code safeguards the right for protection of maternity and paternity for a woman and a man, respectively. The Code stipulates the conditions of depriving of parental rights through judicial procedure. Such conditions may include: "malicious avoidance from exercising parental obligations; abandonment of the child without justifiable reason (refusal to take the child from the maternity hospital or other medical institutions); abuse of their parental rights; cruel treatment towards the children; suffering from chronic drug, alcohol or toxic addiction; committal of intended crime against their children".

186. Abandoning the child after delivery is deemed as a voluntary action in the consequence of which that person is deprived of parental rights through judicial procedure. This process is fully enshrined by the Family Code of the Republic of Armenia, is of voluntary nature and does not differentiate between children with or without disabilities as well as when a parent is disabled.

187. If the parents have no means to take care of their child with disabilities or refuse to take care of a child with disabilities, the State takes charge of that child in accordance with the current procedure by placing the child in 24-hour care centres for children with disabilities. With regard to handover of children with disabilities for care to distant relatives (such as grandmother, grandfather, uncle or aunt), the same procedure is effective as with children without disabilities. This practice is exercized based on the principle of voluntarism, upon expression of willingness by the relatives and is enshrined by a respective court decision.

188. The prohibitions and respective punishment envisaged by the Criminal Code (article 122) for illegal abortion and sterilization apply to all persons, including the persons with disabilities. Thus, the persons with disabilities are equally protected from forced abortion and sterilization as the persons without disabilities.

Article 24 – Education

189. The recognition of the right to education for persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia is enshrined in article 35 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia in accordance to which "Everyone shall have the right to education. Basic general education shall be compulsory for everyone in the Republic of Armenia". It should be mentioned that secondary education at State educational institutions is free of charge. Every citizen has the right to receive free education at State higher and other professional educational institutions through competition in a manner defined by law. In cases and in the manner envisaged by law the State renders financial and other support to educational institutions implementing higher and other professional educational programmes and to the students studying therein.

190. In accordance with the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On education" adopted in 1999 "The State shall create necessary conditions for the purpose of receiving education in line with the development peculiarities of citizens with special educational needs and for ensuring social adaptation". Meanwhile, the same law enshrines that the education of children with special educational needs may be pursued both at general educational institutions as well as special schools with special programmes. Starting from 2001, with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Bridge of Hope Non-governmental Organization and Mission East Danish International Organization, general education schools of the Republic of Armenia started practicing inclusive education. From 2001 to 2005, a pilot programme on inclusive education was implemented in five general

education schools. The concept of "inclusive education" was defined by the adoption of the Law "On education of persons with special educational needs" in 2005. In accordance with the said Law, "Inclusive education is the joint education at general educational institutions of persons with special educational needs, through the establishment of specific conditions of education, with those having no need for such conditions". Since 2007, the network of general education schools implementing inclusive education has been expanding. As per the order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia, nowadays 98 general education schools implement inclusive education with about 2,390 children with special educational needs studying therein. Parallel to the advancement of inclusive education, the number of special purpose general educational institutions decreases. In 2002, 52 special purpose schools operated in the republic where about 10,000 children studied. Today, 23 special purpose schools operate in the republic where about 2,500 schoolchildren study. No differences are envisaged for girls and boys in the educational programmes of these students.

191. The State also takes care of the elaboration of auxiliary educational literature. In the course of 2011, eleven courseware and other educational materials were developed, published and purchased in order to organize the education of children with special educational needs in the most suitable language. Those materials were provided to schools with special and inclusive education programmes.

192. In 2007, Yerevan Medical Psychological and Pedagogical Assessment Centre was established. The main objective for establishing this institution was to identify the educational needs of children with special educational needs and to develop individual educational programme meeting the educational needs of children, irrespective of the educational institution chosen by the parent of the child. The developments posed new challenges for the Assessment Centre, namely, the assessment of educational needs of children with the view to organize the education effectively. New criteria need to be developed based on functional needs of a child. In that case, the individual curriculum of a child will be developed based on the assessment of real educational needs of a child and will contribute to the child's development. Yerevan Medical Psychological and Pedagogical Assessment Centre assessed educational needs of about 2,200 children during 2011.

193. As per the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 1365-N of 26 August 2005, the funding for a child with special educational needs attending a general education school is carried out at increased rates. The Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 439 of 8 April 2010 established one common State criteria on general education for all students; according to this document, the content of the general education programme is adapted to the perception and intellectual abilities of children with special educational needs with the aim to organize their education in an effective manner.

194. The pilot project on introduction of general inclusive education system has been implemented in Tavush marz since 2009 through the financial support of the Norwegian Government and by the Bridge of Hope Non-governmental Organization and Mission East Danish International Organization. Based on this project experience, a programme on general inclusion in general education system has been implemented in Tavush marz since 2011 by the Decision No. 46-N of the Government of the Republic of Armenia of 27 January, and a pilot procedure for funding of organization of education for children with special educational needs has been introduced, according to which positions of Teaching Assistant and special pedagogues were provided to all the 77 general education schools. Today, all the general education schools in Tavush marz are implementing inclusive education and have specialists who provide pedagogical-psychological support. According to the UNICEF analysis data, Tavush marz registers the highest index of inclusion of children with disabilities in general education schools.

195. In October 2012, the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia adopted in its first reading the Draft Law of the Republic of Armenia "On making supplements and amendments to the Law of the Republic of Armenia 'On general education'" which envisages shifting to general inclusive education in the system of general education by applying a three-layer system of responding to a child's educational needs.

196. The provision of article 14 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia" clearly mentions the privileges granted to persons with disabilities by the State in the sector of education: "The costs of education of persons with the 1st degree and 2nd degree disabilities and persons having the status of a person with disabilities admitted to State higher educational or secondary-professional educational institutions shall be covered by the State budget funds.

197. Those on full-time attendance that pass the exams and the tests with positive grades shall be paid tuition irrespective of the allowance or pension they receive".

198. "Arev" talker computer programme operates in the Yerevan School No14 for children with visual impairments, and it is equipped with 14 printed textbooks in Braille language as well as with talking textbooks.

199. A special course in sign language is conducted in Yerevan special educational complex of children with hearing impairments which is the only institution in the republic organizing education for children having deafness. The school applies the method of bilingualism, teaching is organized in two methods — the sign language and the mother tongue.

Article 25 – Health

200. In accordance with article 38 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia "Everyone shall have the right to receive medical care and services in the manners prescribed by law. Everyone shall have the right to benefit — free of charge — from basic medical services. The list and procedure for providing thereof shall be defined by law".

201. The provision of medical assistance to the citizens of the Republic of Armenia is regulated by the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On medical assistance and service to the population". In accordance with article 4 of that Law "Everyone, irrespective of nationality, race, gender, language, belief, age, health condition, political or other views, social origin, property and other status, shall have the right to benefit from medical aid and service in the Republic of Armenia. Everyone shall have the right to benefit from medical aid free of charge or on favourable conditions within the frameworks of special public health programmes guaranteed by the State".

202. In accordance with article 11 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia", "persons with disabilities are guaranteed quality medical aid — free of charge or on favourable conditions — in State medical establishments at the account of State budget funds. Persons with 1st degree and 2nd degree disabilities and children with disabilities are provided with free prescription medication and persons with 3rd degree disabilities — are provided with a 50 per cent discount unless they are eligible for medication on more favourable conditions. The persons with disabilities reserve the right for the first-priority service in medical clinics and pharmacies".

203. In accordance with article 8 of the same Law "Medical rehabilitation is the system of activities for treating different diseases, injuries, physical or intellectual and other impairments with the purpose to prevent the progress and deterioration of impairments and diseases causing the disability. Medical rehabilitation includes rehabilitation treatment,

reconstructive surgery, prosthetic-orthopaedic aid, supplying technical equipment for rehabilitation that is conducted through hospital, outpatient or health resort treatment. Medical rehabilitation is conducted by the structures of the Ministry of Healthcare of the Republic of Armenia, agencies, insurance, charity and other medical establishments". Rehabilitation of persons or children with disabilities is conducted in medical establishments, rehabilitation centres, health resorts and other similar organizations through implementation of medical activities.

204. In case of health impairment or injury, including when the disease develops into chronic phase, the relevant medical, social and expertise committees or rehabilitation organizations elaborate an individual rehabilitation plan for the person with disabilities. In accordance with article 10 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia", "the individual rehabilitation plan shall define the scope of rehabilitation activities, the types and terms thereof, the types of social assistance, the required work conditions as well as the types of special technical means and services conditioned by the limitations of the activity".

205. The medical insurance is a relatively new phenomenon in the Republic of Armenia; it is implemented within the framework of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On insurance and insurance activities" and does not envisage any restriction or discrimination towards persons with disabilities. In accordance with the decision adopted by the Government of the Republic of Armenia in 2011, certain categories of employees engaged in public service (irrespective of whether they are with or without disabilities) receive social assistance package an element whereof is health insurance. The Health Insurance Concept Paper is currently in circulation, wherein no discrimination against persons with disabilities is envisaged either.

Article 26 – Medical treatment and rehabilitation

206. The Medical-Social Expertise Agency elaborates and prepares individual rehabilitation plans for persons recognized as having disability by way of conducting multi-dimensional assessment consisting of three sections, one of which covers measures contributing to medical rehabilitation. Upon their consent and based on individual rehabilitation plans, the persons with disabilities receive respective rehabilitation services, prosthetic-orthopaedic products, supplementary and technical rehabilitation means, equipment.

207. Each year about 460 children with disabilities and about 1,350 persons with disabilities receive sanatorium rehabilitation treatment at the account of State budget funds.

208. Energetic efforts are taken in relation to health rehabilitation of persons with disabilities also in the marzes of the Republic of Armenia where rehabilitation events are organized with the participation of different non-governmental organizations.

(a) Lori marz:

- Within the framework of "Health Bridge" grant programme, a health resource centre is established equipped with technology, books and video materials aimed at raising awareness on health care topics among the beneficiaries and at medical consultation effectiveness. Within the framework of the project, the resource centre cooperates with the Republican Scientific Medical Library and Vanadzor State Medical College. A website with health care dimension has already been created. Children's Centre of Vanadzor non-governmental organization has organized annual health care programme within the framework whereof necessary medical aid is provided at Vanadzor medical centre to children from all districts of the marz that have locomotive, bone, burn and other impairments. In the course of the project,

130 children with disabilities of the marz passed medical consultation service conducted by physicians from Germany. The non-governmental organization arranged events in several schools of Vanadzor on prevention of violence against children.

- There is a hot line on issues of health care and social security at the Department of Healthcare and Social Security of Lori regional administration. A free hot line is also functional within the framework of "Everything for us-with us" project implemented by "Full life" non-governmental organization. Hundreds of calls have been received at the aforementioned hot lines, which have been operating for about a year, from persons with disabilities on the violated rights in health care, social and many other sectors. Both the mentioned non-governmental organization and the employees of the regional administration department swiftly responded to the problems raised.

(b) Shirak marz:

- Within the framework of "Light to Armenian Eyes" project and supported by regional administration of Shirak, 564 pensioners with disabilities passed medical check-ups on eyesight and 406 of them received free surgical medical assistance.
- Twelve open-door days were organized at the medical establishments of the marz with the support of regional administration, in the course of which 380 persons with disabilities passed free medical check-ups. Proceeding from necessity, 16 of them received free surgical medical assistance.

(c) Armavir marz:

- Together with non-governmental organizations dealing with problems of children with disabilities and under the motto of "Children with special needs are full members of the society", children with disabilities aged 2 to 14 underwent medical examinations by physicians from Germany upon intermediation of "Nairi" non-governmental organization. Five children underwent surgery. The process is on-going.
- Every month, 228 participants of World War II and equivalent persons registered at the medical establishments of the marz, as well as 58 participants of Artsakh War who are all with disabilities receive dispensary service. Those needing medical treatment receive free the treatment and necessary medication.
- The Armavir branch of "Child development and rehabilitation centre" functioning within "ArBeS" health centre has received and provided rehabilitation treatment to about 45 children with disabilities each year since 2010 at the account of State budget funds. There are also six similar centres functioning in the marzes of the Republic.
- Since October 2010 up till now, 141 persons with disabilities have received health resort vouchers to pass rehabilitation and treatment in health resorts of Arzni, Jermuk, Gandzaghbyur. Persons with disabilities also receive referrals to republican and marz medical establishments in order to receive medical assistance within the framework of State-guaranteed order.

(d) Syunik marz:

- The specialists of Kapan branch of Yerevan Medical-Psychological-Pedagogical Assessment Centre paid regular house visits to households with children with disabilities that cannot attend school and receive in-house education with the purpose to provide on-site support.

209. The Government of the Republic of Armenia adopted the Decision No. 1369-N on 22 September 2006 "On approving the procedure for providing rehabilitation assistance" in accordance to which rehabilitation assistance is provided to the customer, based on social-psychological individual rehabilitation plan. In case a decision is adopted to provide social assistance based on an application of a person or the representative thereof — in a manner prescribed by the legislation of the Republic of Armenia — the territorial social service agency shall elaborate a social-psychological individual rehabilitation plan of a customer guided by the principles of coordinating social assistance and provision thereof as defined by the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social assistance".

210. Within 15 days after the customer files an application, the agency organizes an in-house visit and assesses the social problems and needs thereof and formalizes them in the plan. After the integrated social service system is introduced, it is expected that needs of persons with disabilities will be assessed comprehensively based on which it will be possible to prepare more effective individual plans and to carry out more effective rehabilitation programmes.

211. When there is stable and long-lasting functional impairment of body due to illness, injury or mutilation of a citizen, he or she is referred to medical-social examination. The procedure for conducting medical-social examination is approved by the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 276-N of 2 March 2006.

212. The list of "socially vulnerable and individual (special) groups of population entitled to free medical assistance and service guaranteed by the State" is defined by the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 318-N of 4 March 2004 "On free medical assistance and service guaranteed by the State" wherein persons with the 1st, 2nd, 3rd degree disabilities, children with disabilities up to the age of 18 and children from families having persons with disabilities (up to the age of 18) are enlisted.

213. Affordable medication is very important for the treatment and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. This fact is even more important when the illness of the person with disabilities is of chronic nature and requires taking medication permanently in the course of life. Proceeding from this circumstance, the Government of the Republic of Armenia adopted the Decision No. 1717-N in 2006 "On approving the lists of diseases and social groups of population entitled to acquire medication free of charge or on privileged terms". In accordance with that Decision, persons with the 1st and 2nd degree disabilities, children with disabilities (up to the age of 18), children from families having persons with disabilities (up to the age of 18) are entitled to provision of free medication.

214. According to the same Decision approved by the Government, the persons with the 3rd degree disabilities are granted the right to acquire medication at a 50 per cent discount. It is apparent that the basis of the said Decision in relation to providing privileges is the disability of the citizen.

Article 27 – Work and employment

215. According to Article 32 of the Constitution of the republic of Armenia, "Everyone shall have the freedom to choose occupation. Every worker shall have the right to a just remuneration not lower than the minimum laid down by law, as well as to working conditions meeting the safety and hygiene requirements. It shall be prohibited to admit to permanent employment children under sixteen years of age. The procedure and conditions for admitting them to temporary employment shall be prescribed by law. Forced labour shall be prohibited".

216. Article 3 of the Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia prescribes the principles of labour legislation, as follows:

(1) Freedom of employment, including the right to employment, which should be freely selected or agreed upon by each person; the right to administer the labour capacities, the right to choose the profession and type of activity;

(2) Prohibition of any type (nature) of compulsory work and violence with respect to employees;

(3) Legal equality of parties to labour relationships, irrespective of their gender, race, nation, language, origin, citizenship, social status, religion, marital and family status, age, belief or viewpoint, participation to political parties, trade unions or non-governmental organizations, other factors unrelated to the employee's professional qualities;

(4) Provision of the right to timely and full fair remuneration to each employee in the amount not less than the minimum salary defined by law.

The aforementioned shows that the term "disability" is not enshrined in the legal equality of parties to labour relationships. In this regard, the Code needs to be amended.

217. The State ensures the exercise of employment rights in accordance with the provisions of the Labour Code and other laws. Labour rights may be restricted only by law if that is deemed necessary for State and public security, public order, public health and morals, protection of rights and freedoms, honour and good will of others.

218. Employment relationships of the population of the Republic of Armenia are regulated by the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, the Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia, the Civil Code of the Republic of Armenia, the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On employment of population and social protection in case of unemployment", other legal acts and international treaties of the Republic of Armenia.

219. In accordance with the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On employment of population and social protection in case of unemployment", unemployed jobseekers having difficulties in job placement and incapable to meet the equal competition in the job market are entitled to additional guarantees of social protection. Such persons are divided into 9 groups, the first group consisting of persons with disabilities.

220. On 22 December 2010, supplements and amendments were made to the Law, aimed at boosting active and effective policy implementation in the employment sector. The amendment to the Law allows the unemployed jobseekers with disabilities to participate in the programme on secondment to another work location. The next amendment regulates the arrangement of working practice for the jobless and the unemployed jobseekers with disabilities who have a profession but are lacking professional work experience. Such amendments facilitated the job placement of persons with disabilities.

221. If the medical-social examination identifies restriction of ability of a person recognized as having disabilities to engage in work activity, the contra-indications and indications for the type of work and conditions thereof, recommendations to continue professional work or to take a job in another profession will be mentioned in the professional rehabilitation section of the individual rehabilitation plan. The professional rehabilitation plan is registered online; it serves as a basis for the employees of State Employment Service Agency for inclusion of a person with disabilities in respective programmes and for arranging his or her employment. In their turn, the employers can alleviate the work conditions of a person with disabilities or create appropriate conditions for them taking the recommendation letters as a basis.

222. In addition to the above-mentioned, to ensure employment of persons with disabilities, the State Employment Service implements "Professional training courses, vocational rehabilitation of jobseekers with disabilities" programme aimed to assist the

trainees to acquire new abilities and skills that are in line with labour market demands and, consequently, find an appropriate job. Concurrently, the programme encourages persons with disabilities to engage in entrepreneurial activities on their own. The professional training and vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities are implemented with the consideration of the individual rehabilitation plan of the person with disabilities developed by territorial bodies of the Medical-Social Expertise Agency of the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of the Republic of Armenia. The duration of professional training courses is 3 months, and 6 months for preliminary professional training and vocational education.

223. With the view to ensure employment of persons with disabilities, the State Employment Service implements remuneration compensation programme with the purpose to support job placement as a result whereof for each person with disabilities (also uncompetitive persons) placed in a job the employer is compensated in the amount of 50 per cent of the salary fixed by the employer but not more than the minimum monthly salary which amounts to 32500 drams according to the acting law. 1st degree and 2nd degree uncompetitive persons with disabilities included in the compensation programme are granted compensation of salary for a period of 2 years, and persons with the 3rd degree disabilities and other uncompetitive persons, for a period of 1 year.

224. Within the framework of compensation of costs of the jobless and the unemployed jobseekers with disabilities with regard to secondment to another working location (the programme runs not less than for a period of 1 year), the following costs are compensated to those leaving to another location for temporary or permanent residence:

- Transportation costs of the person and his or her family members;
- Costs for transporting belongings of the person and his or her family members;
- Per diem for the person and his or her family members in case he or she leaves for work to another location that is more than 30 km away, in an amount defined by the Government of the Republic of Armenia;
- Lump sum financial assistance in the amount of 3-fold of the minimum monthly salary;
- Transportation costs for visiting the permanent place of residence for 4 times during one year;
- Monthly pay for accommodation and utilities in the amount of minimum monthly salary.

225. The financial assistance provided to the unemployed jobseekers with disabilities for State registration of entrepreneurial activities is yet another programme with regard to their employment within the framework of which appropriate funds are provided to those willing to engage in entrepreneurial activities to register a commercial organization or be registered as an individual entrepreneur. The provided funds are defined in the following amounts:

- For being registered as an individual entrepreneur — 3-fold of base fee;
- For registering a commercial organization — 12-fold of base fee;
- For registering a brand name — 6-fold of base fee;
- For acquiring a seal — in the minimum amount of the price scale established by the State professional organization producing seals.

226. Following the amendments and supplements to the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On employment of population and social protection in case of unemployment", the programme of work practice at the employer's site of the jobless and the unemployed jobseekers with disabilities having a profession but lacking work experience was also called

to life. The aim of this programme is to support the trainees to acquire professional qualification in line with work experience, to become more competitive in the labour market and to get an appropriate job. The duration of the practical training programme is 3 months; according to the Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia, the work practice is deemed as professional training carried out by an employer and the trainee is deemed as a student. In the whole course of the practical training the trainee is paid a salary in the amount of minimum monthly salary and the trainer is paid in the amount of 20 per cent of average monthly salary for the previous year but not more than the minimum monthly salary.

227. The State Employment Service Agency also implements "job matching the employer" programme for jobseekers with disabilities the aim of which is to support the proper job placement of persons with disabilities by job matching at the employer and to support the employer to fill in the open vacancies. For each person with disabilities included in the programme, the costs relating to acquiring, assembling and installing work facilities — property, equipment, work tool, — incurred by the employer with the purpose of job matching are compensated, and the employer concludes an employment contract with the person with disabilities and submits a copy of the contract to the State Employment Service.

228. With the view to apply a career guidance system, as well as instruments for assessing personal abilities, "Youth career guidance centre" State non-commercial organization was established within under the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of the Republic of Armenia one of the main aims whereof is to guide schoolchildren, including those with disabilities, to labour market by identifying their individual peculiarities and preferences, to support their competitiveness in the labour market and their entrance thereto. The main aim of youth career guidance is to equip an individual with general skills of career development that covers his or her continuous development as a learner, an employee and a citizen. The centre renders consultative services of career guidance and employment to teenagers and young people, including those having disabilities, develops for this purpose methodology for work with beneficiaries, work instruments, organizes and conducts individual and group works, public events. In addition to immediate work with the beneficiaries, the specialists of the centre render appropriate services to the parents of the children, to specialists and employers that work with children.

229. The mission and goals of the centre arise from the priorities of challenges in education, employment and youth affairs. Particularly, the issues that require investment of career guidance system as the main precondition for solving them are enshrined in the "Sustainable development programme" approved by the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 1207-N of October 30 relating to the aforementioned sectors.

230. To address the problems of persons with disabilities and, particularly, to integrate them into the society, "Centre for career guidance and work rehabilitation of persons with disabilities" State non-commercial organization was established by the Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 408-N of 15 April 2010, the major goals whereof is to contribute to formation of career orientation of the persons with disabilities, their work rehabilitation in line with labour market demands, ensuring equal opportunities in the labour market and their full social inclusion and integration. Resulting from works implemented by the centre in 2010 to 2012, 2,430 persons with disabilities received consultative services, 160 persons with disabilities registered as jobseekers, 280 persons with disabilities participated in different programmes and 43 persons with disabilities found work.

231. On 8 November 2012, the Draft Protocol Decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia "On approving strategy on employment in the Republic of Armenia for the years 2013 to 2018" and the Action Plan for implementing this strategy was

adopted. The aim of the employment policy according to the aforementioned draft — as an element of economic policy — is to ensure meeting the labour market demand with labour force with adequate quality and quantity and to ensure effective utilization of the available labour force supply, which must be regarded as the main condition for sustainable economic growth. The aim of the employment policy — as an element of social policy — is to guarantee internationally recognized standards of decent work and to consistently follow its conditions, to ensure identification of uncompetitive groups in the labour market and effective integration thereof, which must be considered as one of the main conditions for alleviating social tension in the country.

232. Having regard to the principles of employment policy suggested by the employment strategy, the strategic problems and priorities in the sector of employment as well as effective legislative support for the main implementation tools of those priorities, a new law is expected to be adopted to regulate the sector. To that end, a concept paper on the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On employment of population" is expected to be elaborated.

233. An effective area of focus of the concept paper must be considered, which is the development and implementation of an employment policy that — on one hand — will result in ensuring employment through development of professional skills of jobseekers, raising their economically proactive attitude and — on the other hand — will encourage the employers to fill the available vacancies both with skilled specialists in modern specializations, new technologies and with young people and uncompetitive persons in the labour market where the persons with disabilities make a large number.

234. As of 1 July 2012 the number of persons with disabilities registered at the territorial centres of the State Employment Service Agency made up 1,259 (as of 1 July 2011 the number of registered persons with disabilities was 1,227).

235. The following is the statistics as per programmes following the activities implemented within the State programmes aimed to support the employment of persons with disabilities:

- "Professional training, rehabilitation of work skills of persons with disabilities" programme — 118 persons with disabilities were included in the programme, 14 were recruited in the course of 2011. In the course of the first half year period of 2012, 41 persons with disabilities were included in the programme.
- "Partial compensation of the salary to the employer when hiring uncompetitive groups in the labour market" programme — 225 uncompetitive persons were included in the programme, of which 116 were persons with disabilities in the course of 2011. Eleven of them were persons with the 1st degree disabilities, 45 with the 2nd degree, and 60 with the 3rd degree. In the course of the first half of 2012, 146 uncompetitive persons in the labour market were included in the programme, of which 76 were persons with disabilities, including 5 of the 1st degree, 28 of the 2nd degree, and 43 of the 3rd degree.
- "The financial support to the jobless and persons with disabilities for State registration with the purpose of engaging in entrepreneurial activities programme" — 4 persons with disabilities were registered as individual entrepreneurs in the course of 2011; 3 persons with disabilities were registered as individual entrepreneurs in the course of the first half of 2012.
- "Compensation of costs in relation to seconding to another work location for the unemployed" programme — 1 person with disabilities was seconded in the course of 2011 and in the course of the first half of 2012 no person with disabilities has been included in the programme so far.

- "Job matching the employer for persons with disabilities" programme — 11 jobs were matched within the framework of the programme in the course of 2011 and 8 jobs in the course of the first half of 2012.
- "Organization of job fairs" programme — 6 job fairs were organized and — by the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) — 1 career day was organized for young people in the republic in the course of 2011 and 2 job fairs were organized in the course of the first half of 2012. Both non-governmental organizations engaged in work with problems of persons with disabilities and persons with disabilities themselves participated in the aforementioned events.

236. In addition to State programmes, projects are implemented within the framework of international cooperation. Among them are:

- "People with disabilities in Armenia, the promising workforce" project is envisaged for three years and has been implemented since 2010 with the financial support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands by Human Dignity and Peace charity fund, Dutch Activa International and State Employment Service in Erebuni-Nubarashen community and the town of Hrazdan. The outcomes of the project for the year 2011 are presented in the table below:

No	*Name of indicator*	*Outcome*
1	Number of jobseekers with disabilities	197
2	Number of registered persons with disabilities	94
3	Number of examined persons with disabilities	91
4	Number of employed persons with disabilities	28
5	Number of persons with disabilities included in professional training programmes	30
6	Number of persons with disabilities included in the programme on partial compensation of salary with the purpose of providing employment	14
7	Number of working places adjusted for persons with disabilities	3
8	Number of aware persons with disabilities	545
9	Number of aware employers	417
10	Number of participations at job fairs	3

- "From the crisis towards decent and safe jobs" programme implemented by the International Labour Organization within the framework of which a project to promote employment for persons with disabilities in 3 pilot centres (Ashtarak regional, Shengavit community of Yerevan and Abovyan territorial centres) has been implemented since 2011. The expected outcome is to enlarge the opportunities for decent jobs for uncompetitive groups by matching the jobs with their needs. Within the framework of the programme:

  (a) The specialists of the pilot centres were trained in needs assessment of person's working capacities, job matching and job analysis;

  (b) The work stations of 5 persons with disabilities recruited with the assistance of the centres were equipped with property acquired with the support of the programme.

- In cooperation with the World Association of Public Employment Services (WAPES), German International Cooperation (GIZ) and State Employment Service Agency (SESA of Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of the Republic of Armenia)

an international workshop was organized in Yerevan on September 5 to 6, 2011 on the topic of "Good practices of public employment services to integrate vulnerable groups into the labour market". About 60 representatives participated in the workshop from public employment services of different European countries and other organizations.

237. In accordance with the Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia and the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On trade unions" no discrimination or special requirement is applied towards persons with disabilities for joining trade unions. The interests of employees with disabilities are protected by trade unions equally and similarly as those having no disabilities.

238. No information is collected in the Republic of Armenia with regard to unofficial labour market and the persons with disabilities therein, thus, it is hard to assess to what extent the programmes in the sector of employment contribute to the shift of the persons with disabilities from unofficial to official sector of employment.

239. To promote employment among persons with disabilities, provisions are enshrined in the draft law that stipulate compulsory job standards (quotas) for organizations, irrespective of their form of ownership. Having analysed the socioeconomic situation in Armenia, the risks and effects expected following the application of the quotas, it is recommended to introduce quotas in stages. In the first stage, one year after the law enters into force, the requirement of a quota is set for State organizations having one hundred and more employees and after two years — for non-State organizations. In the second stage, the requirement of a quota is set for State and non-State organizations having fifty and more employees and in the third stage — for organizations having from 20 up to 50 employees. For violation of the requirement of the quota, amounts of fines and penalties are stipulated.

240. The introduction of quotas in stages and the application thereof will contribute to ensuring sustainable employment of jobseekers with disabilities in Armenia, the effective use of their potential as workforce as well as development of social commitments by the employers. Perhaps this process should undergo such legislative regulation and consistent management by the State that it will create objective and comprehensive opportunities at macro and mic[illegible] levels to avoid possible losses of economic efficiency and to decrease such losses to the minimum.

241. As an alternative option for ensuring employment of persons with disabilities, the concept of establishing social organizations is also enshrined in the draft law.

Article 28 – Standards of decent life and social protection

242. In accordance with article 37 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia "Everyone shall have the right to social security in cases of old-age, disability, sickness, loss of bread-winner, unemployment and other cases provided for by law. The scope and forms of social security shall be defined by law".

243. In accordance with article 9.1 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia", "social rehabilitation shall be a system of social, socio-psychological, pedagogical, legal and economic activities which aims to create opportunities for persons with disabilities in all spheres of public life equal to other citizens. Social rehabilitation shall include orientation in social surrounding and adaptation to social living".

244. The financial, social and medical security of persons with disability shall be provided in the form of cash payments (such as pensions, allowances or lump sum

assistance) medication, prosthetic-orthopaedic and other technical means, psychological, legal and services of other nature.

245. The minimum consumer basket and the minimum salary are deemed to be a benchmark for citizens. The minimum salary is fixed by the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On minimum salary" and amounts to 32,500 drams (35,000 drams as of 1 January 2013). Currently, the minimum consumer basket in the Republic of Armenia is calculated by the National Statistical Service in two methods:

- Calculated based on methodology of the World Bank — the consumer basket actually calculated based on comprehensive survey findings of living standards of households conducted in 7,872 households by the NSS of the Republic of Armenia in 2009, which amounted to 37,081.5 drams as per current prices of the third quarter of 2012;
- Calculated according to composition, structure and energy of food developed by the Ministry of Healthcare of the Republic of Armenia, which amounted to 50,443.1 drams as per current prices of the third quarter of 2012.

246. The Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social assistance" was adopted on 24 December 2005 and entered into force on 1 January 2006, which regulates the relations with regard to provision of social assistance. The Law defined the principles of organizing and providing social assistance, the scope of its beneficiaries (including persons with disabilities), the types and forms of social services rendered, the rights, obligations, scope of responsibility of the customer and the social worker. In accordance with article 4 of the Law the main objectives of social assistance are the following:

- To address the basic needs of persons in difficult life situations;
- To create conditions for integration into the society;
- To promote their self-assistance skills and skills to solve incurring problems on their own;
- To prevent their social isolation;
- To assist to solution of their social, financial problems.

247. The following are the main types of social services provided for by article 7 of the Law: provision of consultative, legal, rehabilitation, cash, in-kind assistance; provision of temporary shelter; nursing; other types of social services not proscribed by law. The aforementioned functions are performed by the territorial bodies of social service, the Day Care Centre for Elderly and professional rehabilitation organizations.

248. One of the State assistance programmes implemented in the Republic of Armenia is the Family Benefit Programme, which is implemented in accordance with the provisions provided for by the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On State benefits" and other legal acts regulating the sector. It's a targeted programme: the customer is the family and it is substantiated based on an indirect assessment method of family need. The family benefit of persons with disabilities is established on general basis proceeding from the requirements provided for by the aforementioned law and other legal acts regulating the sector and any discrimination with regard to disability is excluded.

249. In accordance with the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On State benefits" a poor family acquires the right to family benefit where its poverty index is beyond the poverty threshold. Thus, the financial assistance to persons with disabilities is provided proceeding from the index of poverty of the family where that persons lives. The Government of the Republic of Armenia approves the family poverty evaluation procedure. The family poverty index is drawn having regard to several indicators, particularly, the social group of each

family member (for example, person with disabilities, pensioner, child, unemployed or adult person with working capacity), the number of family members without working capacity, the residential area of the family (for example, borderline area or disaster zone), the lodging conditions of the family, the average monthly family income and other indicators (generally 12 factors have been defined). The social groups of family members are 17 in number each of them having their own poverty index. Particularly, persons with 1st, 2nd, 3rd degree disabilities and disabled from birth are categorized into different social groups. The presence of such persons in the family scales up the family's poverty index during its calculation. The higher the index, the more poor the family is deemed to be.

250. The Law "On State benefits" also provides for terms of emergency assistance. A family not entitled to family benefit and registered in the family poverty evaluation system has the right to emergency assistance in case it appears in dire life situation requiring urgent response. The emergency assistance is provided by the recommendation of the social assistance council with due regard to several conditions, also including the presence of a persons with disabilities in the family. The function of social assistance councils adjunct to territorial bodies providing social services on a voluntary basis and include representatives of non-governmental organizations within their structures.

251. Each year, proceeding from the economic reforms implemented in the country, as well as from the poverty level dynamics, the State budget of the Republic of Armenia envisages specific funds for family benefit and assistance under emergency conditions. Proceeding from the size of those funds, the Government of the Republic of Armenia defines the poverty threshold for the right to family benefit, the size of the benefit as well as reviews the family poverty evaluation procedure.

252. The Concept Paper on Organizing the Process of Provision of Integrated Social Services has been approved by Protocol Decision No. 21 of the Government of the Republic of Armenia of 3 June 2010. The introduction of the system of integrated social services is one of the main programmes on the reform carried out in the social field. The provision of integrated social services is a means aimed at raising the quality and accessibility of social services, rendering them customer-oriented, raising the effectiveness of their evaluation and monitoring, as well as that of the whole process. Provision — through case management — of a more targeted and need-based support to persons with disabilities is as well envisaged by the introduction of the system.

253. In 2012, the Government of the Republic of Armenia approved the Programme of Introduction of Integrated Social Services System and the pilot project on the formation of marz centres, according to which the first four centres are to be formed in Ararat marz.

254. The number of families having adults or children with disabilities, which received family allowances and emergency assistance in 2010-2012, is given below:

(a) The number of families having a family member with disabilities and receiving a family allowance, by years:

Families	*2010*	*2011*	*As of 1 July 2012*
Having I degree of disability	3,000	2,609	3,199
Having II degree of disability	14,050	11,986	14,518
Having III degree of disability	7,165	6,105	7,057
Having a child with disabilities under 18	3,035	2,685	2,805

(b) The number of families having a family member with disabilities and receiving urgent monetary support, by years:

Families	*2010*	*2011*	*As of 1 July 2012*
Having I degree of disability	269	433	192
Having II degree of disability	1,413	2,405	1,774
Having III degree of disability	590	1,091	1,329
Having a child with disabilities under 18	36	51	25

255. Provisions on integrating persons with mental disabilities into society are envisaged by the 2006-2015 Strategy on the Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities, approved by the Government of the Republic of Armenia on 4 November 2006. The mentioned strategic plan has as well been submitted to the relevant Council of Europe commission on issues related to persons with disabilities.

Article 29 – Participation in political and social life

256. No restrictions are provided for by the Republic of Armenia legislation for ensuring the full participation of persons with disabilities in political and social life.

257. According to article 28 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, "Everyone shall have the right to form associations with other persons, including the right to form and join trade unions. Every citizen shall have the right to establish political parties with other citizens and to join them. No one may be forced to join any political party or association. Operation of associations may be suspended or prohibited only in cases provided for by law, through judicial procedure". Article 27 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia specifies that "Everyone shall have the right to freely express his or her opinion. It shall be prohibited to force a person to renounce his or her opinion or to change it".

258. According to the existing Armenian legislation, the citizens of the Republic of Armenia have the right to participate in the State governance, vote at national referenda and elections of public administration bodies, vote and be elected for public administration, as well as local self-government elective bodies.

259. According to article 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, "Everyone shall have the right to hold peaceful, unarmed assemblies". Holding of these assemblies should be coordinated with the representatives of local executive authorities, as prescribed by law.

260. Article 3 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia" defines that "Persons with disabilities shall have the same rights, freedoms and obligations prescribed by the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia and laws as the other persons. The rights and obligations of persons with disabilities may be abolished or amended in the cases and manner prescribed by the Constitution and the laws of the Republic of Armenia, where the exercise thereof is rendered impossible due to the restrictions of the vital activity of the person with disabilities. The officials and citizens guilty of violation of the rights, freedoms and lawful interests of persons with disabilities shall be held liable, as prescribed by law".

261. According to article 30 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, "Citizens of the Republic of Armenia — who have attained the age of eighteen — shall have the right to vote and to take part in referenda, as well as to take part in the State governance and local self-governance directly and through their representatives elected by free expression of their will".

262. With respect to the exercise of the right of suffrage of persons with disabilities, article 3 of the Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia defines that "Electors shall participate in elections on equal grounds, the State shall provide equal conditions for the exercise of the right of suffrage of electors, electors shall — irrespective of national origin, race, gender, language, religion, political or other views, social origin, property or other status — have the right to vote and to be elected".

263. The only restriction is that citizens declared by a court judgment as lacking active legal capacity, as well as citizens sentenced — by a court judgment entered into force — to imprisonment and serving the punishment are not entitled to vote and to be elected.

264. In recent years, persons with disabilities have been more actively participating in public processes and civic initiatives. Persons with disabilities are — either independently or through coordination — involved by non-governmental organizations in the electoral processes. Non-governmental organizations actively participate in electoral processes, carrying out participatory, observation activities, as well as those of transportation of persons with disabilities to electoral precincts and of promoting exercise of the latter's right of suffrage . Targeted activities are being carried out aimed at ensuring an accessible environment for persons with disabilities, particularly by building wheelchair ramps. Despite of the existence of a favourable legislative field, the problem of ensuring the accessibility of public and local self-government bodies, public, cultural, sports facilities or electoral precincts for persons with motor disorders still exists.

265. Relevant activities are envisaged in the electoral process, which ensure an opportunity for persons with disabilities to exercise their right of suffrage without barriers. These activities include:

- Special electoral precincts are formed in isolation units and other places of confinement, and members of the commission of a nearby electoral precinct visit healthcare facilities with mobile ballot boxes and a relevant number of ballot papers for ensuring the exercise of the right of suffrage of the electors who are on inpatient treatment in those facilities. The same procedure applies to visiting persons with disabilities with no moving opportunities in their places of residence. Lists of persons with disabilities with mobility problems and of those on inpatient treatment in healthcare facilities are made and provided to the members of the precinct electoral commission in advance;
- The electors, who are not able to vote unaided due to health problems, have the right to be assisted by another voter as authorized by the precinct electoral commission;
- A special tactile template was used for persons with disabilities with visual impairments for the first time at the elections of the National Assembly in 2012, which provides such people with an opportunity to vote unaided.

266. Relevant requirements for the areas of electoral precincts are established by the decisions of the Central Electoral Commission. Those areas should, in particular, be accessible for persons with disabilities, have ramps for providing entry and exit without barriers. Having regard that mainly educational institutions, such as schools, colleges or pre-school institutions are selected as electoral precincts, it should be noted that those buildings are mostly adjusted for persons with disabilities.

267. The Central Electoral Commission requires that one polling booth envisaged for secret ballot in each electoral precinct should have an appropriate width, ensuring easy access of the wheelchair to it.

268. An important role is assigned to non-governmental organizations established by direct participation of persons with disabilities or to those engaged in the issues related to such persons in ensuring the efficient participation of persons with disabilities in social and

political life. Unification of mentioned organizations in any organization, union or federation is as well encouraged. This could be best illustrated by the Federation of Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities (APD Federation) which is functioning in 4 marzes of the Republic of Armenia and includes 16 non-governmental organizations. There are currently up to 35 non-governmental organizations in the Republic of Armenia engaged in addressing disability-related issues.

269. Non-governmental organizations, their associations and unions are established for the purpose of the social protection of persons with disabilities, as well as for ensuring the protection of equal rights and opportunities for them. Those organizations, within the course of their activities, reveal and eliminate practices preventing the exercise of equal rights and opportunities of persons with disabilities, provide different services to persons with disabilities and help them integrate into the society. The mentioned non-governmental organizations may be divided into the following groups, according to their functions:

- Awareness raising non-governmental organizations which disseminate information relating to the rights of persons with disabilities, their problems, and needs among persons with disabilities, their family members and public in general;
- Service-provider non-governmental organizations which provide persons with disabilities and their family members with various services, such as psychological and legal counselling, care services, either in-house or in day care centres, as well as organize professional instruction and training;
- Non-governmental organizations which contribute to the self-expression of persons with disabilities, organizing, in particular, different conferences on disability issues, as well as cultural and sports events and those aimed at ensuring entertainment and recreation.

270. Non-governmental organizations are regularly involved by public administration or local self-government bodies in discussions on disability-related issues and in the decision-making process relating to those issues. This could be best illustrated by Regional (marz) Commissions on Disability Issues established in marzes which include among their members most active non-governmental organizations engaged in disability-related issues in marzes.

271. The State supports the formation of non-governmental organizations and their active operation, providing them with certain privileges, in particular:

- Non-governmental organizations receive a State order from social funds and the State budget for provision of certain services;
- Non-governmental organizations have privileges in the tax field defined by the law on non-governmental organizations, *i.e.* they are exempted from income tax and value added tax, as well as other taxes, depending on their statutory functions;
- Non-governmental organizations may be provided with financial support on the account of the State budget.

Article 30 – Participation in cultural life, sports events and other leisure activities

272. According to article 40 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of literary, artistic, scientific and technical creation, the right to benefit from scientific achievements and to take part in the cultural life of society". Meanwhile, article 33 of the Constitution defines that "Everyone shall have the right to rest. The maximum working time, rest days and the minimum duration of annual paid leave shall

be defined by law". Article 48 of the Constitution mentions that "The main tasks of the State in the economic, social and cultural spheres shall be promoting the participation of the youth in the political, economic and cultural life of the country, promoting the development of physical culture and sport, implementing programmes for the prevention and treatment of disability, promoting the participation of persons with disabilities in the social life, promoting the development of science and culture, and contributing to the free communication, of everyone, with the national and universal values".

273. Participation of persons with disabilities in cultural life is ensured by the active participation of non-governmental organizations and owing to the financial support provided by State and donor organizations.

274. Various events were organized in 2010-2012, contributing to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in cultural life. These activities include:

- Implementation of Arev (Sun) Information Communication Project in libraries for ensuring provision of information to blind persons and those with low vision within the framework of which the mentioned project was located in the National Library, children's libraries, and regional libraries of the marzes of Kotayk, Vayots Dzor, Gegharkunik, and Tavush of the Republic of Armenia. The project affords an opportunity to visually impaired persons visiting the library to use computer technology;
- Implementation of Family Librarian Project for ensuring the access of persons with limited mobility to library services. This project was implemented in Lori and Shirak marzes of the Republic of Armenia, as a result of which persons with disabilities are provided with library services through home visits;
- Implementation of extracurricular instruction programmes on Aesthetics and Handicrafts in Yerevan, Vanadzor, Gyumri, Spitak, Stepanavan, and Gavar branches of Special Creative Centre for Children SNCO, within the framework of which 614 children with acquired disability, special needs and those socially vulnerable have been provided with cultural education in special boarding schools and children's homes. Free instruction of arts and crafts has been organized;
- Ensuring of support for Paros Chamber Choir to participate in concert tours, within the framework of which Paros Chamber Choir of Unison NGO was supported to participate in concert tours organized in Vienna and in the festival contest of spiritual music in Bratislava;
- Organization of scientific-cognitive sightseeing for persons with disabilities (to the marzes of Lori, Gegharkunik and Syunik of the Republic of Armenia);
- Support for the Ovasis Pantomime Theatre of the Armenian Union of Deaf People NGO for participation in "ЖЕСТ" international pantomime festival held in the Crimea;
- Regular provision of support to non-governmental organizations engaged in issues relating to persons with disabilities for the purpose of fulfilling the cultural initiatives of persons with disabilities, by providing them with appropriate halls.

275. Activities in the field of physical training and sports for persons with disabilities are currently being carried out with 4 groups:

- Visually impaired persons;
- Persons with hearing impairments;
- Persons with locomotor impairments;

- Persons with mental disabilities.

276. Mainly non-governmental organizations are involved in issue related to physical training and sports of persons with disabilities. Several tens of non-governmental organizations engaged in issues related to persons with disabilities are functioning in the Republic of Armenia. National Paralympic Committee of Armenia, Armenian Sports Committee of the Deaf, Special Olympics Armenia, Armenian Association of the Blind non-governmental organizations are well-established and widely known organizations in the field of physical training and sports of the Republic.

277. State support is currently being provided to the abovementioned four non-governmental organizations involved in disability sport through Disability Sport Related Services Programme. Those organizations help — through physical training and sport — persons with locomotor, visual, and hearing impairments, as well as those with mental disorders identify themselves and fully integrate into the society. An estimated 9,000,000 (nine million) Armenian drams allocated from the State budget, as well as the additional funds allocated from the reserve fund of the Government of the Republic of Armenia are used by the abovementioned non-governmental organizations for organizing different types of sports events in the Republic, as well as for participating in official competitions held by relevant international organizations (paralympic games, deaflympic games, world and European championships, and credit tournaments).

278. The following events were organized within the framework of the project:

(a) 2010:

- Republic of Armenia championships of 4 types of sports, namely futsal, wrestling, volleyball, and chess, were organized among disabled persons by the Armenian Sports Committee of the Deaf non-governmental organization, in which 205 persons participated.
- A chess tournament was organized by the Armenian Association of the Blind non-governmental organization of disabled persons, in which 23 persons participated.
- Sports games dedicated to the International Day of Disabled Persons were organized by Special Olympics Armenia, in which 120 persons participated. Meanwhile, 4 athletes of the same organization participated in 2010 Special Olympics European Summer Games which took place in Warsaw, the capital city of Poland.
- A sports festival of 6 types of sports was organized for disabled persons by National Paralympic Committee of Armenia, in which 60 athletes participated.

(b) 2011:

- Republic of Armenia championships of 5 types of sports, namely chess, Greco Roman wrestling, free style wrestling, volleyball, and futsal, were organized for disabled persons by Armenian Sports Committee of the Deaf, in which 241 athletes participated.
- A chess tournament of the Republic of Armenia was organized by the Armenian Association of the Blind non-governmental organization of disabled persons, in which 20 persons participated.
- A football championship was organized by Special Olympics Armenia non-governmental organization, in which 64 athletes participated. Participation of 4 athletes in Special Olympics World Summer Games in Athens, the capital of Greece, was ensured. The Republic of Armenia athletes won at those competitions

1 gold, 1 silver, and 2 bronze medals in track and field athletics and 1 gold, 1 silver medal in swimming. .

- A sports festival of 6 types of sports was organized for disabled persons by National Paralympic Committee of Armenia non-governmental organization, in which 80 athletes participated.

- State support of 13,747,000 Armenian drams was provided to Armenian Sports Committee of the Deaf non-governmental organization through the 2011 Programme on Holding the European Wrestling Championship of Deaf Persons in Yerevan for organizing and holding the European Wrestling Championship of Deaf Persons in Yerevan. Six adult and eight young athletes participated from Armenia, thus 14 athletes in total. The adults took 1 gold, 1 silver, and 3 bronze medals, and the young athletes won 2 gold and 5 silver medals.

- National Paralympic Committee of Armenia was allocated 1,682,220 Armenian drams from the reserve fund of the Republic of Armenia Government to ensure the participation of 2 athletes in the Powerlifting Championship of Disabled Persons held in the United Arab Emirates. One silver medal was won at those competitions, and a relevant credit was earned for participation in 2012 London Paralympic Games.

- National Paralympic Committee of Armenia non-governmental organization, jointly with the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of the Republic of Armenia and with the sponsorship support of different organizations, organized and held a wheelchair racing by Republic Square — Yerablur route, in which more than 30 persons participated.

(c) 2012:

- Republic of Armenia championships of 3 types of sports, namely chess, Greco Roman wrestling, and free style wrestling, were organized for disabled persons by the Armenian Sports Committee of the Deaf, in which 118 athletes participated.

- A football championship was organized by Special Olympics Armenia non-governmental organization as part of Special Olympics Pan European Football Week Project, in which 48 athletes participated.

- A sports festival of 6 types of sports was organized for disabled persons by National Paralympic Committee of Armenia non-governmental organization, in which 96 athletes participated.

- The Republic of Armenia Men's Individual Championship of Blind Chess Players was held by the Armenian Association of the Blind non-governmental organization of disabled persons, in which 12 persons participated.

- Armenian Sports Committee of the Deaf non-governmental organization, jointly with the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of the Republic of Armenia and with the sponsorship support of different organizations, organized and held Happy Starts family competitions dedicated to the International Day of Deaf People (29 September), in which 30 persons participated (10 families x 3 persons).

- National Paralympic Committee of Armenia non-governmental organization, jointly with the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of the Republic of Armenia and with the sponsorship support of different organizations, organized and held a wheelchair racing of disabled persons by Republic Square–Yerablur route, in which more than 30 persons participated.

- Armenia was represented by 2 athletes at the 14-th Summer Paralympic Games in London. For the purpose of ensuring their participation, in the first half of 2012 the Republic of Armenia Government allocated 5,853,000 Armenian drams to the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of the Republic of Armenia to be donated to the National Paralympic Committee of Armenia non-governmental organization.

- An estimated 6,380,600 Armenian drams were allocated to the Armenian Sports Committee of the Deaf non-governmental organization from the reserve fund of the Republic of Armenia Government for participation in the Third World Deaf Wrestling Championship held in Sophia, the capital of Bulgaria. Three of the five athletes in Greco Roman style were awarded 1 gold and 2 silver medals.

279. Summarizing the events of the reporting period, it should be noted that 412,455 and 341 athletes participated in different sports events within 2010, 2011 and 2012 respectively, thus 1,208 persons in total.

280. In addition to purely sports events, workshops dedicated to disability sport related issues were organized and held by the National Paralympic Committee of Armenia in 2011-2012, jointly with the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of the Republic of Armenia and through the sponsorship support of various organizations. Twenty-one representatives of interested ministries, as well as of 12 representatives of non-governmental organizations involved in disability-related issues participated in the workshops.

281. Children's summer spa camps are organized for disabled children, where children receive rehabilitative treatment, are engaged in different clubs (such as embroidery, drawing, nature protection or tourism), and participate in sports events. Non-governmental organizations, as well as regional social services organizations and those engaged in issues related to children actively participate in organization of such camps.

282. In accordance with point 68 of Annex 1 of Decision No. 1055-N of the Government of the Republic of Armenia of 9 August 2012, the Government of the Republic of Armenia approved the 2013-2015 Programme on Artistic and Aesthetic Education of Children and Youth and the Event Checklist, according to which the implementation of programmes on the development of artistic skills of children with special needs, in particular of those with disabilities, is aimed at ensuring conditions for their participation in cultural life, as well as for receiving appropriate cultural education.

283. The key objective defined in the mentioned decision is the necessity of attaching great importance to the artistic and aesthetic education of disabled children, which will help them integrate into the society, acquire a profession and identify themselves in life.

Part III. Women and Children with Disabilities

Article 6 – Women with disabilities

284. According to the statistics, 84,981 (46.6 per cent) of 182,379 persons with disabilities registered in the Republic of Armenia are women, as of 1 July 2012, and 4,542 (41.1 per cent) women have first degree of disability, 38,605 (44.7 per cent) women — second degree of disability, and 39,263 (51.1 per cent) women — third degree of disability.

285. Equality of rights of men and women in the Republic of Armenia is ensured by the provisions of the Constitution. This equality applies to sociopolitical, cultural activities, educational, as well as other fields.

286. Corresponding provisions relating to ensuring the equality of men and women are also included in the pension system legislation.

287. In particular, the retirement age of men and women was equalized (63 years old) in 2011, child care-related retirement privileges provided to women were abolished (retiring before the age of retirement). Certain steps have been taken towards ensuring the equality of men and women in labour relations, relating, in particular, to maternity protection and balancing of work with family responsibilities.

288. Notwithstanding the steps aimed at the equality of men and women, a number of privileges provided to women still exist in labour relations. Thus, it is prohibited to employ — on holidays and days off, for night and shift work — pregnant women and those taking care of a child under the age of three, as well as send them on a business trip without their consent, as defined by the Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia. Meanwhile, additional breaks or reduced working hours are envisaged for pregnant women and those taking care of a child under the age of three.

289. The Labour Code also envisages certain privileges for the working women who take care of a person or child with disabilities. Such women are provided with benefit for temporary incapacity to work (for a certain number of days of care provision within a year), depending on the conditions in which the care is provided (outpatient, inpatient or sanatorium treatment).

290. The draft law of the Republic of Armenia "On equal opportunities and equal rights of men and women in the Republic of Armenia" is being elaborated in the Republic of Armenia, for the purpose of ensuring actual equality of men and women and excluding gender-based discrimination in all spheres of activities of the society.

291. Taking into account that women are the major victims of trafficking, amendments were made to the Civil Code of the Republic of Armenia and the Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia in 2011 for the purpose of protection of the interests and rights of the victims of trafficking, as well as for the prevention of trafficking.

292. International cooperation in this field is being strengthened as well.

293. Various international conventions and legal acts on women's and gender-related issues have been ratified by the Republic of Armenia:

- 1993 — Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- 1995 — Beijing Action Plan;
- 2000 — Millennium Development Goals;
- 2008 — Convention on the Political Rights of Women.

294. Particular attention is paid by the State to women and children with disabilities, as well as to persons with multiple disabilities. This is well illustrated by the following provision enshrined in the Section "Objectives and Main Directions of the Strategy" of the "2006-2015 Strategy of Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities": "The strategy reflects a special approach towards groups of persons with disabilities requiring greater attention (for example, children and women with disabilities or persons with multiple disabilities)".

295. Fundamental rights and freedoms of a person, equal opportunities and rights for men and women, as well as the principles of the protection of the rights of the child, established in Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia and in other legal acts apply to all persons whether with or without disabilities. Thus, women and girls with disabilities enjoy, equally with other persons, the fundamental rights and freedoms provided for a person.

Article 7 – Children with disabilities

296. According to the statistics, 8,156 (4.5 per cent) of 182,379 persons with disabilities registered in the Republic of Armenia are children with disabilities, as of 1 July 2012. About 585 (68.5 per cent) of them are boys, and 2,571 (31.5 per cent) are girls.

297. Article 1 of the Family Code of the Republic of Armenia defines that "The family, maternity, paternity and childhood are under State and society sponsorship and protection in the Republic of Armenia. The State guarantees primary protection of the rights of children". This provision applies to all children, including those with disabilities, regardless of the sex of the child.

298. Protection of childhood is one of the priorities of State strategy and is aimed at ensuring the exercise of the right of the child to the protection of life and health, education, social protection, and comprehensive development. State policy excludes manifestation of discrimination in this field against children with disabilities and mental health problems. The State directs its efforts towards the implementation of measures aimed at protection of childhood, by developing a relevant legislative field (such as the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of children deprived of parental care", the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia", or the draft Law of the Republic of Armenia "On protection of the rights and social inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia") and undertaking economic, organizational, sociocultural, educational, sports and other events. At the same time, the State strives to approximate the existing legislation to the requirements of international norms, ensuring free development of children.

299. Free medical assistance, service, medication supply, as well as available education adapted to the individual needs of children are ensured and guaranteed for children with disabilities on the account of the State Budget. The mentioned guarantees equally apply both to boys and girls with disabilities.

300. Boys and girls with disabilities may freely express their opinion on issues relating to them and receive assistance according to their disability and age.

301. In particular, article 44 of the Family Code of the Republic of Armenia defines the right of the child to express his or her own opinion, according to which "The child shall have the right to be present at the examination of the issue affecting his or her interests and express his or her own opinion in the family, judicial or other bodies. Taking into account the opinion of the child above the age of ten shall be mandatory with regard to the freedom of consciousness, participation in certain events, refusal from receiving extracurricular education, living with one of the parents, communication with relatives, as well as to other cases provided for by law. In the cases provided for by this Code, guardianship and curatorship authorities or the court may adopt a decision relating to the child above the age of ten only upon his or her consent.

302. Importance is attached to the right of children with disabilities to education. From this point of view, the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On education of persons with special educational needs" and the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On education" identify the basic principles necessary for the effective provision of education to persons with special educational needs. Application of inclusive education in this field was a major amendment which was first introduced in several schools on an experimental basis, and afterwards was included in the abovementioned laws on education and widely spread throughout the Republic.

303. Inclusive education is defined as "Education of persons with special educational needs in general and professional education institutions jointly with persons not having such needs, through provision of special conditions for them". According to article 14 of

the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia", the State ensures free professional education in mid-level vocational or higher education institutions for children having 1st and 2nd degrees of disability, where the minimum requirements for admission to those institutions are met.

304. According to article 12 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities", "the authorities of the State education system jointly with social security and healthcare authorities shall ensure the pre-school education of children with disabilities and provide conditions for persons with disabilities for receiving secondary, secondary-vocational and higher education, in accordance with the individualized rehabilitation plan for persons with disabilities".

305. In 2012, upon request by the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of the Republic of Armenia and by the assistance of the UNICEF, the Armenian Marketing Association conducted a survey on access to education, health, and social protection services for children with disabilities. The survey contains data on inclusion of children with disabilities in all levels of education as well as on opportunities for them to access healthcare, social and other community services. The findings of the mentioned survey will serve grounds for developing appropriate targeted programmes.

306. The State provides free accommodation to children deprived of parental care, including those with disabilities, who have been raised in child care centres or foster families, after they attain the age of 18 (after becoming adult).

307. The State pays permanent attention to further professional education of those children, to their employment activities and the process of their full integration into the society.

308. Striving to comply with the international requirements in the protection of children's rights, the Republic of Armenia has ratified different international conventions relating to child issues:

- On jurisdiction, applicable law, recognition, enforcement and cooperation in respect of parental responsibility and measures for the protection of children;
- On the protection of children and cooperation in respect of intercountry adoption;
- On the rights of the child;
- On the worst forms of child labour;
- On the civil aspects of international child abduction.

Part IV. Special responsibilities

Article 31 – Statistics and data collection

309. In accordance with article 16 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On social protection of persons with disabilities": "The State shall guarantee freedom of information for persons with disabilities".

310. The information on rehabilitation of persons with disabilities is collected in the form of a database. Those databases contain the following data:

- Information on the organizations offering rehabilitation services;
- Information on persons with disabilities with regard to the nature and causes of disabilities, gender, age and other personal data on persons with disabilities;

- Information on educational and professional level of persons with disabilities;
- Information on children with disabilities with regard to gender, age and other personal data;
- Information on family members of persons with disabilities with regard to gender, age, family income, demand, opportunities to meet the needs of persons with disabilities and other data;
- Information on prosthesis-orthopedic and other technical means necessary for the person with disabilities, medication used by him or her, required rehabilitation services and sanatorium treatment.

311. Such database enables consolidation of the available resources for settling disability-related issues and using them for identified purposes upon necessity.

312. Meanwhile, databases have been developed where the personal data of persons with disabilities are collected (including name, surname, address, type of illness, needs, data of family members and family resources). These databases enable individual monitoring of the situation of each person with disabilities and of his or her rehabilitation process.

313. The Ministry of Labour and Social Issues is empowered with the duty to monitor those information databases and conduct analyses based thereon. Further improvement of those databases is envisaged by collection of new data and further improvement of database support software. However, it needs further elaboration since it does not comply with ISI principles.

314. The administration of State statistics in the territory of the Republic of Armenia, *i.e.*, relations pertaining to the collection, development, accumulation, summarization, maintenance of statistical data on socioeconomic processes in the Republic, on population and the fields of its vital activities, as well as to the analysis, exchange and provision of statistical data (publishing) are regulated by the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On State statistics" which fully complies with the international standards and principles in the field of statistics, particularly with the Fundamental principles on official statistics, adopted at the forty-seventh session of Economic Commission for Europe, held in Geneva, and at the session of United Nations Statistical Commission in 1994 in New York.

315. "The cornerstone of official statistics shall be the privacy of personal data, which arises from the requirement of article 14(7) of the Law of the Republic of Armenia "On State statistics" in accordance with which statistical data is deemed to be confidential (statistical secrecy) where they enable disclosure (identification), direct or indirect, of the provider of the statistical data, *i.e.*, acquisition of personal (identification) data. Data available to public from other sources shall not be deemed to be statistical secrecy.

316. Data deemed to be statistical secrecy shall not be subject to publication or dissemination in any other form without the consent of the provider thereof. The establishment of the aforementioned provisions arises from the United Nations fundamental principle of "secrecy" with regard to official statistics, according to which the identification data collected for statistical purposes by statistics authorities, whether they relate to natural or legal persons, are confidential and may be used exclusively for statistical purposes.

317. Statistics on persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia relies on the data of administrative registers. Upon availability of resources, household surveys are also conducted. Data collected on persons with disabilities relate, in particular, to their number according to gender, age, disability degree, disability according to causes and illnesses, as well as to the rehabilitation assistance provided to persons with disabilities, by type.

318. Summary information on persons with disabilities is published by the National Statistics Service of the Republic of Armenia in "Socioeconomic Situation in the Republic

of Armenia" monthly information reports and "Statistical Yearbook Armenia", "Women and Men in Armenia" and "Social Situation in the Republic of Armenia" monthly statistical collection. Those publications are available in the library of the National Statistics Service of the Republic of Armenia, as well as at www.armstat.am website, and are publicly available.

319. Statistical data of persons with disabilities are given in Annex I, according to years.

Article 32 – International cooperation

320. Within the framework of issues related to persons with disabilities, the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of the Republic of Armenia closely cooperates with the international organizations currently acting in the field, including the International Labour Organization, the Department of Economics and Social Affairs of the United Nations, UNICEF, the Council of Europe, USAID, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

321. The cooperation is mainly aimed at carrying out reforms in the sector, developing policies and programmes, human and institutional capacity-building, public education and awareness, improving the quality and accessibility of services rendered to persons with disabilities, integrating persons with disabilities into the society and the labour market.

322. Persons with disabilities and non-governmental organizations engaged in issues relating to persons with disabilities regularly participate in the programme and legal acts development.

323. Legal acts regulating the sector, as well as the programmes are developed based on the best international practice.

324. A number of programmes are implemented in cooperation with foreign States and international organizations, particularly:

- "Persons with Disabilities in Armenia, the Promising Workforce" three-year project has been implemented since 2010 in Erebuni-Nubarashen community of Yerevan and in the town of Hrazdan by Human Dignity and Peace (HDP) Charity Foundation and Activa International organization of the Netherlands and with the financial support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands;
- In 2012, the USAID "Improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities through the promotion of employment, three-year project has been launched and is implemented by Save the Children organization. The main objective of the project is to promote equal opportunities of employment and work accessibility for persons with disabilities as a fundamental human right. The expected outcomes of the project are: raising accessibility and availability of the service package for persons with disabilities, improving the quality of education and employment, raising public awareness on employment and labour rights, improving the policy implemented in the field.
- The International Labour Organization implements "Decent Work" programme envisaged for 2007-2012. The priorities identified in the programme are the following:
    - Improving the employment policy;
    - Strengthening social partnership;
    - Improving the system of social protection.

Within the framework of the project, the issues of the adaptation of working conditions for persons with disabilities are considered as well.

- UNICEF implements the "Children's Rights Monitoring and Social Policy" project envisaged for 2012-2013 and aimed at supporting the development of the system of children's rights protection in Armenia, including children with disabilities, as well as raising the quality and accessibility of social services rendered.

325. Armenia is a member of the Council of Europe since 2001, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues is represented in the following committees of the Council of Europe:

- Committee of the European Social Charter and the European Code of Social Security;
- European Committee for Social Cohesion;
- Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- Social Protection Coordination Group.

326. International activities in the field of disability and social protection are reflected in the following documents:

(a) Inter-governmental agreements

- Between the Government of the Republic of Armenia and the Government of the Republic of Belarus on temporary professional activities and social protection of citizens working beyond the borders of their countries (signed on 19 July 2000).
- Between the Government of the Republic of Armenia and the Government of the United States of America on social and health issues (signed on 16 August 2000).
- Between the Government of the Republic of Armenia and the Government of the Republic of Georgia on professional activities and social protection of the citizens of the Republic of Armenia working in the territory of Georgia and of the citizens of Georgia working in the territory of the Republic of Armenia (signed on 3 December 1993).
- Between the Government of the Republic of Armenia and the Government of the Russian Federation on professional activities and social protection of the citizens of the Republic of Armenia working in the territory of the Russian Federation and of the citizens of the Russian Federation working in the territory of the Republic of Armenia (signed on 19 July 1994).
- Between the Government of the Republic of Armenia and the Government of Ukraine on professional activities and social protection of the citizens of the Republic of Armenia and Ukraine working beyond the borders of their countries (signed on 19 July 2000).

(b) Interdepartmental treaties

- Memorandum of understanding on cooperation between the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of the Republic of Armenia (signed on 13 March 1992).
- Administrative agreement on cooperation between the Ministry of Social Protection of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security of the Republic of Armenia in the field of pension provisions (signed on 20 October 1993).

(c) Agreements of the Commonwealth of Independent States

- On guarantees of rights of citizens of Members States of the Commonwealth of Independent States in the sphere of pension provision (signed on 13 March 1992).
- Between Members States of the Commonwealth of Independent States on social and legal guarantees for servicemen and individuals who have been released from military service and for their family members (signed on 14 February 1992).
- Between Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States on mutual recognition of the rights to compensation for occupational diseases and other harm caused while fulfilling official duties (signed on 9 September 1994).
- On mutual recognition of the rights to privileged transportation of participants and persons disabled during the Great Patriotic War and of those equated to them (signed on 12 March 1993).
- On cooperation in the field of labour migration and social protection of migrant workers (signed on 15 April 1994).
- On the settlement of issues related to disabled persons and disabilities (signed on 12 April 1996).
- On cooperation in the field of settlement of issues related to disabled persons and disabilities (signed in 1999).

(d) Treaties with international organizations

- Between the Government of the Republic of Armenia and UNICEF (signed on 4 August 1998).
- Between the Government of the Republic of Armenia and the World Food Programme (signed on 9 July 2000).
- Development Loan Agreement between the Republic of Armenia and International Development Association (signed on 30 July 2004).
- "Gender and Politics Programme in Southern Caucasus: Georgia and Armenia" programme between the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of the Republic of Armenia and the United Nations Development Programme (signed on 27 February 2004).
- Between the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of the Republic of Armenia and the United Nations Population Fund on implementation of the Strategic Plan for the Development of Population (signed on 16 May 2005).
- On the Plan of Technical Cooperation between the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of the Republic of Armenia, the Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen (Employers) of Armenia, the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia, and the International Labour Organization (signed on 22 November 2004).

(e) International instruments ratified by the Republic of Armenia

- European Social Charter of the Council of Europe (revised), 21 January 2004 .
- Convention on the Rights of the Child, 22 July 1993.
- Convention on the Nationality of Married Women, 16 August 1994.
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 13 October 1993.

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 23 September 1993.
- Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 23 September 1993.
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 13 December 1993.

(f) Conventions of the International Labour Organization

- Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), 21 December 1993.
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), 21 December 1993.
- Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), 21 December 1993.
- Workers' Representatives Convention, 1971 (No. 135), 21 December 1993.
- Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151), 21 December 1993.
- Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174), 6 November 1995.
- Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No. 176), 12 October 1998.
- Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), 24 September 2003.
- Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105), 25 October 2004.
- Workmen's Compensation (Accidents) Convention, 1925 (No. 17), 25 October 2004.
- Labour Inspection (Industry and Commerce) Convention, 1947 (No. 81), 25 October 2004.
- Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95), 25 October 2004.
- Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), 25 October 2004.
- Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131), 13 December 2004.
- Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), 13 December, 2004.
- Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154), 13 December 2004.
- Labour Statistics Convention, 1985 (No. 160), 13 December 2004.
- Labour Administration Convention, 1978 (No. 150), 28 February 2005.
- Protection of Workers' Claims (Employer's Insolvency) Convention, 1992 (No. 173), 28 February 2005.
- Workmen's Compensation (Occupational Diseases) Convention, 1925 (No. 18), 28 February 2005.
- Labour Clauses (Public Contracts) Convention, 1949 (No. 94), 28 February 2005.
- Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (No. 87), 22 March 2005.
- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), 22 March 2005.

- Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962 (No. 118), 3 October 2005.
- Holidays with Pay Convention (Revised), 1970 (No. 132), 3 October 2005.
- Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921 (No. 14), 3 October 2005.
- Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143), 3 October 2005.
- Minimum Wage Fixing Machinery Convention, 1928 (No. 26), 3 October 2005.
- Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), 3 October 2005.
- Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97), 3 October 2005.

Article 33 – Implementation and monitoring at the national level

327. Legal regulation of social protection, including issues related to persons with disabilities is conducted by the RA National Assembly through relevant laws; by the RA Government — through respective decisions; by the RA President — through respective decrees and by the RA Ministry of Labour and Social Issues — through relevant departmental acts. State administration and local self-government bodies also play a key role in the process of legal regulation as regards the decisions they adopt.

328. Committees at the National Assembly mainly engaged in social issues go as follows: Standing Committee on Health Care, Maternity and Childhood; Standing Committee on Science, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport Issues, and Standing Committee on Social Issues.

329. The Social Issues Department of the Staff of the RA Government is committed to regulating disability issues in the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

330. Charity Programme Coordination Commission of the Government of the Republic of Armenia operates adjunct to the Staff of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, the major functions of which go as follows:

(a) Defining programmes as charitable; changing the qualification "charitable" attributed to a programme (revoking, suspending it), and where such qualification stems from other legal act, filing a motion to the body having adopted the legal act;

(b) Defining the scope of services and products (hereinafter referred to as allied transactions) directly related to and of significant importance to the charitable programmes. Maintaining register of charitable programmes including registering these programmes; maintaining record — keeping of charity support and volunteer work;

(c) Exercising supervision over the implementation of charitable programmes, obtaining information on the progress and conclusion of these programmes;

(d) Organizing the record-keeping and distribution of products acquired by charity, in conformity with powers defined by the decision of the RA Government on exploitation of those products, as well as other functions.

331. The Charity Commission engages in resolving various disability issues within the scope of its competence.

332. Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of the Republic of Armenia is the RA State authorized body in the field of disability issues and is engaged in the formulation of State policy in this field, regulating the works conducted by the State and local self-government bodies and those tailored to meet the requirements of international conventions on

promoting the rights of persons with disabilities and ensuring equal opportunities for them. The Department on Issues of Persons with Disabilities and Elderly Persons of the Ministry Staff operates in the structure of the Ministry.

333. The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia deals with education issues of persons with disabilities, meanwhile, the Ministry of Healthcare of the Republic of Armenia deals with rehabilitation issues of these persons.

334. In addition, the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Urban Development, Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, Ministry of Justice and other bodies of State administration are actively involved in the solution of issues of persons with disabilities.

335. The following powers are delegated to the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of the Republic of Armenia:

- In cooperation with non-governmental organizations, involved in disability issues, assessing the accessibility of housing services, public facilities, transportation, information and communication means and services for persons with disabilities;
- Submitting proposals to the Government, State territorial and local self-government bodies on creating barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities;
- Cooperation with non-governmental organizations involved in issues of persons with disabilities; allocation of State Budget resources to those organizations;
- Monitoring and assessment of programmes on disability issues; identifying the effectiveness of those programmes.

336. State policy on social protection of persons with disabilities is implemented through laws and regulatory legal acts, as well as through Annual Plan on Disability Issues, which is developed by the RA Ministry of Labour and Social Issues and is later on submitted to the consideration of the RA Government. The Annual Plan is integrated into the draft State Budget when submitted to the National Assembly by the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

337. The powers of local self-government bodies with regard to protection of the rights and promotion of freedoms of persons with disabilities are prescribed by law. In furtherance, the head of community shall organize the delivery of social services in the community within the scope of powers delegated to local self-government bodies by the State.

338. The head of the community exercises the following voluntary powers in this sphere:

- Encourages the creation of new jobs, organizes paid public works;
- Introduces measures targeted at the improvement of social conditions of persons with disabilities, families having lost their breadwinner, other socially vulnerable groups.

339. Established by the Decision of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia No. 98 of 25 February 2008, the National Committee on Issues of Persons with Disabilities is a key institution lobbying the protection of rights of persons with disabilities and implementation of the State policy in this field, aimed at supporting a comprehensive approach to the achievement of equal rights and opportunities for persons with disabilities.

340. The Committee is built on the commitment to manage, regulate and supervise the process of achievement of equal rights and opportunities for persons with disabilities, as well as to further systematize the activities conducted by State and non-State organizations.

341. The Committee is comprised of equal number of people to act as representatives of State agencies and non-governmental organizations actively engaged in this field.

142. This Committee provides support to attain equal conditions and opportunities for persons with disabilities, continues its efforts towards their inclusion into the society, resolving social issues, analysing the problems arisen in the course of implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities and developing proposals towards the solution thereof.

143. At sittings convened between 2010 and 2012 the National Committee on Issues of Persons with Disabilities deliberated on a number of mainstreaming disability issues related to persons with disabilities, inter alia, considering all the drafts of legal acts related to the field.

144. Non-governmental organizations have commitments which are underscored in the Republic of Armenia, i.e. exercising a social supervision over the protection of rights of persons with disabilities as regards meeting requirements set forth in regulatory legal acts of this field; achieving effectiveness in implementation of State programmes. Non-governmental organizations demonstrate active participation in developing the legal underpinnings of the social protection field; in particular, these organizations participate in developing drafts of regulatory legal acts, designing and delivering State programmes on collecting, processing, transferring of information tailored to solve issues of persons with disabilities.

145. This report was in consent with the State bodies concerned with issues related to persons with disabilities, as well as non-governmental organizations involved in disability issues.

146. The monitoring on the implementation of provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2006 is entrusted to the Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia as stipulated by the RA draft law "On protection of rights and social inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia".